

A Masters Student's Journey: Trying to Balance Two Eyes of Research

Connie Stowe, Master of Arts

Department of Child and Youth Studies

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ABSTRACT

This project is about a reflective research journey taken by a Masters student in the Child and Youth Studies Department at Brock University in St. Catharines Ontario. This journey consisted of a mixed method approach using the qualitative method of autoethnography along with the Indigenous research method of storytelling. The research was done using the concept of two-eyed seeing which consisted of trying to balance the two eyes of research: Indigenous and Western. The Non-Aboriginal researcher not only reflected on her own learning journey but also the lessons she learned from the voices of 48 women from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Like the trickster character Coyote, the researcher struggled, stumbled and was transformed by this journey.

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Introduction

In September 2010, I started my journey as a Masters student in the Child and Youth Studies Department at Brock University. Little did I know how long of a journey it would be for me. A journey of learning with struggles, doubts and fears. I was embarking on a research journey that was going to test my own positionality, commitment and strengths. The methodology that I chose challenged me. It challenged me because the methodology required me to engage in a different way of thinking, which gave me an appreciation of how Aboriginal¹ students must feel when they encounter mainstream/western society's way of thinking. In my case, I chose to experience something different in my learning; and I did. I became a cultural learner, a term Archibald (2008) defines as follows: "A researcher who enters a First Nations cultural context with little or no cultural knowledge is viewed as a learner" (p. 37). A cultural learner must watch and listen before trying to make meaning of what is being said by the community. I consciously took on the role of cultural learner within my interactions with the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory (Six Nations) community and throughout my research experience.

Throughout this research I identify primarily as a white mainstream researcher because I was raised to understand myself as a white middle class woman. I discuss this further in chapter three. There is some Metis ancestry in my family but I learned about it as an adult and it is not a topic that is discussed in my family. When I started this research, I felt that I was a white researcher. I still feel that way as the research has finished but I do have more questions about

¹ Throughout this thesis, I use a number of different terms. Aboriginal is used to refer to all indigenous people of Canada, including Status Indians, Non-Status Indians, Metis and Inuit Peoples. The term Indigenous is used to refer to the broader international context of First Peoples in many lands. There are also times when other terms such as 'Indian' or 'Native' may be used because of use in the original material that I am citing or quoting.

my ancestry and a desire to find my roots. Another aspect of this research that I found particularly challenging was cultural appropriation. As is detailed throughout this document, I have struggled to find an appropriate way of doing this research and decided that incorporating an Indigenous focused methodology would be most appropriate. However, I did not want to engage in cultural appropriation which is defined as taking something as one's own and thereby adopting elements from one culture into another without any consideration of the importance of the original cultural context (see Haig-Brown, 2010). The words and stories expressed in this project represent and honour the people of the Six Nations community. I did not change the words or meanings of what was said as it would only show disrespect to the community (Haig-Brown, 2010). Haig-Brown (2010) also refers to a process of deep learning that may take place when doing research if you allow yourself to be open and question your own positionality. I entered into this project with an awareness that Indigenous approaches to research seemed most appropriate and yet also aware that I must always be conscious of the possibility of cultural appropriation and work to ensure that everything that I did was done in a good way, fully cognizant of the cultural contexts, with full acknowledgement of where the teachings that I was drawing from had originated, and always putting the community first. I found that Jo-Ann Archibald's teachings about being a cultural learner were particularly relevant to me.

The decision to take on the role of a cultural learner strengthened the purpose of my research. Originally, I wanted to explore Indigenous thought and how Aboriginal community members conceptualized parenting within their community. This was a good fit with a large research project that was being conducted by the Student Success Research Consortium. The larger project focused on community and family interactions in order to develop community based initiatives that support parenting within the community as well as stronger relationships

between parents and school and how to foster student success. I had the opportunity to be a research assistant and carve out a small piece of the project for my thesis. However, as I got into the literature on Indigenous thought and research I was very drawn to how research was done differently when it was conducted within an Indigenous methodology. I was also introduced to the term “cultural learner” and I extended my research to focus first on my own journey of becoming a researcher and how I was a cultural learner both within the Aboriginal community and within the Indigenous research culture. The second focus of my research was on how Aboriginal community members conceptualized parenting within their community, with a particular focus on the role of Indigenous thought and knowledge in those conceptualizations.

I chose a methodological approach that would assist me in interconnecting and exploring Indigenous and Western knowledges (Dei, 2000; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall 2009). Learning to do research this way can produce new and more ways of knowing (Kovach, 2008). It was also important that while I was capturing this research experience, I did not leave out the voices of the most important people who shared this experience with me - the Six Nations community members.

One of the principles that I found useful was the concept of two-eyed seeing. Two-eyed seeing is a principle used by some First Nations communities that conceptualizes the use or integration of ways of knowing as an individual seeing through the lens of Indigenous ways of knowing from one eye and Western ways of knowing from the other eye (Archibald, 2008, Hatcher, et al., 2009, Aikenhead & Elliot, 2010). I felt that it was important to learn some of the strengths of the Indigenous ways of knowing. Knowing some of these strengths and working and implementing them in research can speak to the diversity of histories, events, experiences and ideas of both ways of knowing (Dei, 2000).

The data that was used in my research journey is drawn from the Student Success Research Consortium's (Consortium) SSHRC funded research project on parenting which I mentioned briefly on p.2 . The Consortium emerged out a group of community service providers and other Six Nations community members who were concerned about Six Nations students and their educational futures. Brock faculty members were invited to join in the research, and my Faculty supervisor, Dr. Dawn Zinga, has served as the Principal Investigator on the research grant. The Consortium investigates Aboriginal student success within the Six Nations. There are several articles that provide more information about the formation of the Consortium and the associated research (see Styres, Zinga, Bennett & Bomberly, 2010; Zinga, Styres, Bennett & Bomberly, 2009).

My research data is drawn from a series of focus groups. Focus groups are a common approach to use within research when the opinions and experiences of individuals who share certain characteristics are sought (i.e. same community, all mothers). While the collective narrative the results out of focus groups may not be reflective of each individual's experience, it does offer insight into the types of lived experiences and the common threads and differences within the group thus offering a rich narrative (Esterberg, 2002; Huges & DuMont, 2002; Stewart, Shamdesani and Rock, 2007). The focus groups were conducted with the following stakeholder groups: Youth (young people between the ages of 14-25); Parents (ranging in age from 26-75); Young Parents (ranging from 16-25); Service Providers (ranging in age from 21-65); Community Members (ranging in age 21-65); Educators (ranging in age from 21-65); and Traditional people (ranging in age from 21-65). It is also drawn from my experiences with the research processes and my role as a cultural learner. I have captured my journey within six chapters in the following way. Throughout the remainder of this chapter I review the relevant

literature associated with the research and then describe my methodological approach in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three, I offer an autoethnographical accounting of my journey. Chapter Four is dedicated to honouring the voices of the community members who shared their experiences and thoughts within the research. It consists of the following two sections: (1) The common themes that emerged from the six focus groups; and (2) a journey of stories told by three Elders of the many Elders in the community who have their own unique distinctions within the Six Nations community as either a knowledge keeper, language keeper or clan mother. In Chapter Five, I engage in autoethnography to analyze my journey and analyze the voices of the community. I conclude with Chapter Six where I discuss and reflect on my learning journey.

Literature Review

Colonization and Residential Schooling

Kirkness (1999) states that it is important to understand the past and present in order to plan for the future; thus it is important to understand the historical context of colonialism in Canada and how it has impacted Aboriginal communities. Historically, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have struggled through many oppressive governmental policies and practices. Residential schooling seems to be one of the most influential of these practices. In the early 17th Century, day schools were established by European missionaries to civilize the ‘natives’ (Archibald, 2008; Blackstock, Trocome & Bennett, 2004; Bull, 1991; Burns, 2001; Kirkness, 1999; Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003; Kovach, 2005; 2008; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Milloy, 1999; Morrisette, 1994; Smith, Varcoe & Edwards, 2005; Quinn, 2007). In the 1800s the day schools were changed into residential schools and the numbers continued to grow until the 1960s.

Residential schools were very oppressive; they were devised as a way to assimilate and isolate Aboriginal children from their families and culture (Blackstock et al, 2004; Bull, 1991; Burns, 2001; deLeeuw, 2009; Kenny, Faries, Fiske & Voyageur 2004; Kirkness, 1999; Kirmayer et al., 2003; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Milloy, 1999; Morrisette, 1994; Shepard, O'Neill & Guenette, 2006; Smith et al., 2005; Tobias, 1991; Quinn, 2007). Aboriginal children were forced to stop speaking their language, separated from their families and cultural beliefs, punished for communicating with their siblings, and forced to abandon all that they knew, even their names and all of their belongings (Ball, 2008; deLeeuw, 2009; Milloy, 1999; Shepard et al., 2006). Many residential schools operated for over one hundred years and their impact was

profound (Blackstock et al., 2004). The last residential school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996 (Ball, 2008). The residential schools weakened Aboriginal communities. There was a high mortality rate while children attended these schools. Many died from smallpox and tuberculosis and some from loneliness (Kirkness, 1999). The loneliness was a result of isolation and children's disconnection from their families and communities.

The disconnection caused by residential schooling disrupted the intergenerational transmission of culture and practice that traditionally occurred within Aboriginal communities (Blackstock et al., 2004; Burns, 2001; Kirkness, 1999; Kirmayer et al, 2003; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Morrisette 1994; Shepard et al., 2006; Smith et al, 2005; Quinn, 2007). Residential schooling is a very dark part of Canadian history and the repercussions of this are still felt today. Children as young as three and as old as eighteen were removed from their parents and denied a normal childhood and the teachings of their people (Kirkness, 1999). Residential Schools tried to assimilate Aboriginal peoples has had significant negative impacts on their quality of life; it is a life that has wounded their souls (Getty 2010). The wounding of their souls has been transmitted from one generation to the next with the impact of residential schooling, and the disruptions in general transmission and practice of Aboriginal culture, languages, traditions and parenting (Ball, 2008; Blackstock et al, 2004; Burns, 2001; Getty, 2010; Kirkness, 1999; Kirmayer et al, 2003; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Morrisette 1994; Quinn, 2007). The effects of residential schooling has caused a disruption of child caring knowledge and generational disconnect between families and community (Blackstock et al., 2004; Burns, 2001; Kirkness, 1999; Kirmayer et al, 2003; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Morrisette 1994; Quinn, 2007; Shepard et al., 2006). This generational disconnect is associated with an apparent lack of information regarding the traditional parenting practices within Aboriginal communities due to the

imposition of colonization and the impact of residential schooling (Proposed Research Grant, Zinga, 2009).

Parenting

Residential schooling had a significant impact on Aboriginal families and communities. It interrupted traditional parenting practices, disrupted the intergenerational transmission of parenting information and had other long-lasting effects that continue to affect Aboriginal families and communities (Bull, 1991; Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates, 2010). “Many Aboriginal children have a diminished quality of life due to the negative impact of colonization on their parents” (Ball, 2008, p. 7). Many Aboriginal children were raised in institutions not in their communities. They were physically beaten, sexually abused, deprived of proper nourishment, deprived of their families, culture, languages and traditions (deLeeuw, 2009; Morrisette, 1994). Aboriginal children were denied a traditional upbringing and were taught to be ashamed of their culture, language and people (Ball, 2009; Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates, 2010; Morrisette, 1994; Smith et al., 2005). As adults, many of these children continue to struggle with feelings of inferiority and internalized shame about themselves and their culture. For some these feelings get in the way of parenting. Some parents struggle with being a parent (Morrisette, 1994). Traditions and languages of Aboriginal communities need to be included in the education and family life of young Aboriginals.

It is difficult to include traditions and languages into education and family life because many residential school survivors have institutional behaviours; they know order, time, and routine but never witnessed the nurturing side of parenting within the residential school experience (Blackstock et al, 2004). Many families of residential schooling became

dysfunctional and experienced great difficulty in parenting because of the effects being in these institutions (Ball, 2009; Blackstock et al, 2004; Morrisette, 1994; Shepard et al, 2006).

Blackstock et al. (2004) state that “profound disruption of child-caring knowledge and institutionalization of pedagogy ... dismissed the ability of First Nation’s adults to care for their children” (p. 3). It was and still is difficult for some parents to parent traditionally. How can these survivors parent with all of the exclusions of traditions and languages? It can be difficult for some due to the loss of tradition and languages. For some it leads to a child’s/youth’s sense of isolation and a loss of their identity (Baydala, Letourneau, Bach, Pearce, Kennedy, Rasmussen, Sherman, & Charchun, 2007). Baydala et al. (2007) discusses the consequences of being denied access to ancestral tribal ways of life:

When the ancestral context of self is forcefully denied, disintegrated and removed, a dissociative identity founded upon the experiences of colonialism is located outside of the connected self and outside of the tribal context. It is severed from the natural sources of creativity, motivation and strength. (p. 202).

With Aboriginal children and youth being excluded from cultural traditions and parenting practices, many do not have the support needed to feel good about themselves and to succeed in the future. Aboriginal children and youth who are supported culturally (family and community) and academically and who have a strong sense of self along with an environment that honours their cultural traditions, languages and worldview, can be successful in school and throughout their life (Baydala et al., 2007; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher et al., 2009; Kirkness, 1999; Toulouse, 2007; Zinga et al., 2010). So how do Indigenous communities foster success within families so that not only children and youth are successful, but their parents and extended family members as well?

Indigenous communities can help to foster success with the promotion and support of using traditional parenting practices. Evidence has suggested that traditional parenting practices have positive outcomes within Aboriginal families (Monahan & Ball, 2007; Seideman, Jacobson, Primeaux, Burns, & Weatherby 1996). Cultural enrichment that is intertwined with parental support has had a significant effect on young Aboriginal mothers' self worth (Bent, Jacobson & Kelly, 2004). Research has also shown that social support and parenting education can increase the quality of involvement and parenting by Aboriginal fathers (Ball, 2010). Participation in community parenting programs can increase opportunities for social support (Walker & Shepard, 2008, Ball, 2009). It is important to reclaim traditional parenting practices because getting to know about and becoming a part of their culture has an impact on Aboriginals as parents (Ball, 2009; Ball, 2010; Monahan & Ball, 2007). Traditional parenting practices not only allow for reinforcement of cultural identities, but can also nourish family and community relationships (Monahan & Ball, 2007). For many children having a "stimulating and nourishing environments allow for children to learn and thrive" (Walker & Shepard, 2008, p.1). A positive family environment allows children to feel a sense of connectedness to kinship and culture. This connectedness in turn fosters spirituality and cultural belonging that strengthens families (Walker & Shepard, 2008). Introducing knowledge from an Indigenous perspective is an important part of spirituality and belonging within Aboriginal communities and families. Indigenous knowledge connects communities and allows for reproduction of past, present and future knowledge. It allows for a strong sense of self, family, and community. Castellano, 2004, stated that "Creating and sharing knowledge that authentically represents who you are and how you understand the world is integral to the survival of a people's identity" (p. 109). It is important to understand that there are many Indigenous Knowledges when supporting Aboriginal families and communities.

Indigenous Knowledges

When supporting Aboriginal communities there needs to be a clear understanding of Indigenous Knowledges. Having an understanding of Indigenous knowledges can provide an opportunity for Non-Aboriginal peoples to recognize that there are multiple worldviews and knowledge systems and that there needs to be ways to understand and relate to the world through these multiple views (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Indigenous Knowledges (IK) are seen as processes that summarize a set of relationships rather than a concept that is bounded, so that the entire lives of Indigenous peoples represent and embody versions of IK (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). Brayboy & Maughan (2009) find it difficult to give a concise definition as IKs are rooted within lived experiences. (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009, p. 3). Indigenous Peoples have many ways of being, knowing, valuing and integrating with the world and all of these things make up IK (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). These ways of being and knowing the world bring about an interconnectedness of knowledges (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Dei, 2000; Hatcher et al., 2009; Wilson, 2008,). “Connections are central for knowledge production and the responsible uses of knowledge” (Brayboy et al., 2009, p. 10). If there were no connections things would be static. Connections seem to flow and open up possibilities. Interconnecting Indigenous and Western knowledges can be complementary in academic knowledge (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Dei, 2000; Hatcher, et al., 2009). Dei (2000) speaks of the hybridity of knowledges. There are different bodies of knowledge and they can continuously influence each other (Dei, 2000). It is important to see knowledge as being fluid rather than being static (Dei, 2000). Dei (2000) states:

The interplay of different knowledges is perhaps one of many reasons why Indigenous knowledges must be taught in the academy. The goal of integrating (i.e., centring) Indigenous knowledges in the academy is to affirm this collaborative dimension of knowledge and, at the same

time, to address the emerging call for academic knowledge to speak to the diversity of histories, events, experiences and ideas that have shaped human growth and development. And, if we recognize that knowledge is not static but rather constantly being created and recreated in context, then Indigenous knowledges need to be an integral part of the ongoing co-creation and re-creation of academic knowledge/work. (p.4).

Creating and co-creating Indigenous Knowledges can be an integral part of Indigenous communities and it can help strengthen relationships among people and their communities as well as their families. Hatcher et al.,(2009) discuss ‘Toqwa’tukl Kijijitaqnnin’ which in Mi’kmaq language means ‘Integrative Science’ (Hatcher et al., 2009). This integrative science brings knowledge together with the guided principles of two-eyed seeing (Aikenhead 2002; Aikenhead & Elliott, 2010; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama, Marshall, Marshall & Bartlett, 2009). Two-eyed seeing is a concept that allows for using and learning the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing from one eye and Western ways of knowing from the other eye (Archibald, 2008; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama et al., 2009). “Two-eyed seeing intentionally and respectfully brings together our different ways of knowing, to motivate people to use all of our gifts so we leave the world in a better place and do not compromise opportunities for our youth” (Hatcher et al., 2009, p. 146). Two-eyed seeing allows for one to understand the elements of both ways of knowing (Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama et al., 2009). Two ways of seeing the world can bring about transformation. It has been used as a methodological approach to engaging in Indigenous research.

Indigenous Research

Exploring the history of research done on Indigenous peoples is important when adopting Indigenous research methods. Indigenous research methods can open the door for the

co-production of knowledge that can help support social action and bring about social change. Historically Indigenous peoples have been researched through imperial eyes (Smith, 1999, 2005). Indigenous peoples across the world have been viewed as being ‘primitive’ and not ‘fully human’ (Smith, 1999, 2005). Indigenous peoples were seen as lacking intellect. “We could not invent things, we could not create institutions or history, we could not imagine, we could not produce anything of value, we did not know how to use land and other resources from the natural world, we did not practice the ‘arts’ of civilization” (Smith, 1999, p. 25). Indigenous people and beliefs were considered to be savage and barbaric (Smith, 1999). In the early years of colonization, research was pre-occupied with “classifying and labeling” in an attempt to manage Aboriginal people (Smith, 1999). Many of the discourses that classify and label Aboriginals as barbaric, inferior, and not fully human still exist today and this can affect the way research is done with Indigenous communities.

Wilson (2001, 2008), like Smith (1999, 2005), views the word Indigenous as carrying many political implications. Many researchers have conducted studies on Indigenous people; not by or with them (Chirgwin, 2010; Smith 1999, 2005; Wilson, 2008). Inappropriate research practices have continued over the years with use of insensitive research designs and methodologies that matched the needs of the researchers and not the needs, customs, and standards of Indigenous Peoples and their communities (Chirgwin, 2010; Getty, 2010; Smith, 2005; Struthers, 2001; Wilson, 2008). Research conducted on Aboriginal peoples in the past usually focused on the negative aspects of life, not the positive aspects of life. There are always comparisons made between the culture of the “studied” and the “studier” (Wilson, 2008). These comparisons bring about many consequences and one is we rate the “studier” as being better than the “studied” (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous scholars want to have their approaches to research

recognized so that Indigenous peoples are not held back by research, but able to move forward. “It is time for Indigenous peoples to break free from the hegemony of the dominant system, and into a place where we are deciding our own research agendas” (Wilson, 2008, p. 17). Being able to decide their own research agendas would allow Indigenous and Non-indigenous scholars to work within a research paradigm that celebrates how special Indigenous cultures truly are, but also allows for a critical examination of failures within some Indigenous communities (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous researchers have been seeking ways to change how research is done within Indigenous communities. Indigenous scholars and communities have begun to reshape and engage in research around the interests of Indigenous communities by developing new methodological approaches that can privilege the voices, experiences and Indigenous knowledges of Indigenous communities (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2008; Smith, 2005; Wilson, 2001, 2008). Researchers should understand that they need to be involved in the research process ethically, morally, physically and spiritually (Bishop, 2003). It is important that the information shared is done so in a way that elements of the culture are not taken and used in a different manner than it was intended (Haig-Brown, 2010). The information shared needs to be shared in a way that respects the community and culture that it comes from. Researchers need to show respect not only to the community but the process of the research itself. Researchers need to not only be concerned with the methodology that they have chosen but be involved in the research process (Bishop, 2003). There is a process of deep learning that takes place when doing research if you allow yourself to be open and question your own position and assumptions (Haig-Brown, 2010).

Indigenous research methods have recently become more common in community-based research initiatives. Community-based research is often a good approach to Indigenous research

as well as the process of uncovering and producing knowledge that belongs and is relevant to the community (Baydala et al., 2007; Smith, 2005; Zinga et al., 2009). Community-based participatory action research is an approach that allows for Aboriginal peoples to participate in research as partners with academic researchers (Baydala et al., 2007; Getty, 2010). Community-based research allows for research that is useful for the community as well as respectful to their ways of being and knowing the world (Getty, 2010; Tri-council Policy Statement 2, 2010).

Community-first research is a term that is used to describe the Student Success Research Consortium's approach to their research project and also recognizes that the research was initiated by the community (Zinga et al., 2010). Simply put, Community-first research puts the community first. This form of research is seen as a “journey of collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worlds” (Zinga et al., 2009, p. 20). Community-first research is seen as a space where the community, along with their voices, norms, needs, values, and traditions are privileged and intertwine with the research that is being done (Smith, 2005; Zinga et al., 2009). This approach is fluid and allows for the research to come from the community (Zinga et al., 2010). It becomes a place where the community and the researchers feel like they are on a journey together. The journey that takes place within an Indigenous research paradigm recognizes uncovering and producing knowledge that belongs to and is relevant to the community (Baydala et al., 2007). It is important for a researcher to understand and position the community first (Zinga et al., 2010). The journey that I will be taking with the community and the Student Success Research Consortium will be done within the Community-first Research framework. I will be utilizing a methodology that not only engages my Masters learning journey critically but also places the community first! Placing the community first is important because research should not be seen as belonging to the researcher but to the community. The research is

being done with the community based on respect, relationship, reverence and reciprocity (Zinga et al., 2010). The university has partnered with the consortium under the basis that the community always comes first and that the research is not owned but done to help contribute to the community (Zinga et al., 2010).

Chapter Two: Methodology

Choosing a methodological approach to research within Indigenous contexts can be challenging as it is important to honour Indigenous culture and ways of knowing. The challenge of balancing two world views and the negative history of research being done on Indigenous peoples makes the choice of methodology very important. When participating in research with Six Nations it is important to recognize that not all worldviews and perceptions of reality are the same. It is important to acknowledge how worldviews and perceptions differ across cultures (Struthers, 2001). This was especially true for me as I embarked on my research journey with Six Nations. There are many different ways of knowing and viewing the world and there are also many different ways of gathering, understanding, and collecting information while doing research (Struthers, 2001). I chose to intertwine the qualitative research approach of autoethnography and the Indigenous research approach of storywork. A qualitative research design can be difficult to define but it can contribute more to a holistic worldview as it brings fluidity to the research process (Struthers, 2001).

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research does not have its own particular theory or paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). There is no distinct set of methods or practices used within qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). "Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 7). Qualitative researchers use a wide variety "of interconnected interpretative practices in order to grasp an understanding of the subject matter at hand" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). Qualitative research involves the use of many types of empirical materials, such as case studies, artifacts, cultural texts, personal

experiences, life stories, interviews, as well as observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Denzin & Lincoln (2005) discuss the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur* who learns to borrow from many different disciplines. The *bricoleur* can also be seen as the maker of quilts; meaning that the quilt maker can use whatever materials are needed to do his/her research. The maker of quilts pieces together new tools, strategies, and techniques (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Richardson (2011) sees a *bricoleur* as a kind of handy person who can make something using different tools and materials. Throughout my research, I thought about myself as the *bricoleur* and used the qualitative form of research known as autoethnography with the Indigenous form of research known as storywork. Intertwining these two forms of research can be done using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is always flowing and changing. Qualitative research can be seen almost as a crystal. (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). "Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 963). A researcher using a qualitative method is not constrained to a traditional research method, but rather explores research with different methods. Not all research questions can be explored through traditional methods so it makes sense for researchers to push themselves beyond methodological boundaries (Taber, 2010). I pushed myself beyond methodological boundaries as I chose to do research not only within a qualitative paradigm, but also an Indigenous research paradigm. As mentioned earlier, interconnecting Indigenous and Western knowledges can be complementary in academic knowledge (Dei, 2000; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher, et al., 2009). I felt it would be complementary to interconnect the two forms of knowledge so I explored these two research paradigms through the process of Autoethnography and the Indigenous process of storytelling.

Autoethnography

"Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Ellis (2004), Holt (2003) and Wall (2006) define autoethnography by deconstructing the word into three terms: auto (self), ethno (the cultural link), and graphy (the application of the research process). Autoethnography involves highly personalized accounts by an author who draws on his/her own experiences to develop an understanding of a particular discipline or culture (Holt, 2003). This type of research allows for the ethnographer to interact with the culture being researched (Holt, 2003). It is important to connect the self to the social (Tabar, 2010). An autoethnographer uses his/her own experiences in a culture reflexively so they look deeper into self and other interactions (Holt, 2003). The researcher puts his/her own feelings and experiences into the story (Anderson, 2006). Incorporating these feelings and experiences into the data allows a better understanding for the social world that is being observed (Anderson, 2006).

Autoethnography is a part of the postmodern paradigm. It is grounded in postmodern philosophy (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Ellis & Bochner, 1999, Holt, 2000, Richardson, 2000, Wall, 2006). Postmodernism is about many ways of knowing. It questions or deconstructs claims of absolute truths. "Postmodernism suspects that all truth claims mask and serve particular interest in local, cultural, and political struggles" (Richardson, 2000, p. 8). I chose to do autoethnography because it opens the doors to other ways of knowing (Wall, 2006). Other ways of knowing can have the capacity to change traditional research methods as well as the way we view the world around us. Changing conventional research methods can allow others to see a change to the way we understand taken for granted knowledge (Diener, 2008). Taken for granted knowledges can blind us from other ways of knowing. I want to bring awareness to the

importance of other ways of knowing, in particular Indigenous Knowledge and traditions and how important they are for the Six Nations community. Part of my role as a researcher is bringing about awareness to other ways of knowing.

Autoethnography is not about the self, it is about the self in research with the other. It allows for reflexive writing (Richardson, 1994). Writing reflexively allows for the researcher to be intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually present in the research process (Richardson, 1994). "Reflexive ethnographers ideally use all of their senses, their bodies, feelings, their whole being- they use the 'self' to learn about the 'other', and they raise their experiences in other worlds to reflect critically on their own" (Burke, 2007, p. 39). Writing in this form can allow for a path to knowledge and a tool for learning (Fortin, Cry, & Tremblay, 2005). Writing is about opening ourselves to other ways of knowing, researching and learning through a form of storytelling. Storytelling is an important part of my methodological approach and it is also an important part of an Indigenous research paradigm.

Indigenous Research and Storywork

An Indigenous research paradigm comes from a fundamental belief that knowledge is relational (Wilson, 2001; 2008). It is shared with all creation. It is not just individual knowledge, it is a knowledge that is relational (Wilson, 2001; 2008). As a researcher "you are answerable to all of your relations when doing research" (Wilson, 2008, p. 56). An Indigenous research paradigm is based upon Indigenous worldviews and knowledges (Getty, 2010). "The foundation of Indigenous research lies within the reality of the lived Indigenous experience. Indigenous researchers ground their research into the lives of real people. Real people are seen as social beings and not a world of ideas" (Wilson, 2008, p. 60).

Wilson (2008) sees these following principles as being an important guide to an Indigenous research paradigm: Indigenous peoples themselves approve the research and the research methods;

- “A knowledge and consideration of community and diversity and unique nature that each individual brings to the community;
 - Ways of relating and acting within community with an understanding of the principles of reciprocity and responsibility
 - Research participants must feel safe and be safe, including respecting issues of confidentiality
 - A nonintrusive observation, or quietly aware watching
 - A deep listening and hearing with more than ears
 - A reflexive non-judgemental consideration of what is being seen and heard
 - Having learnt from the listening of a purposeful plan to act with actions informed by learning, wisdom and acquired knowledge
 - Responsibility to act with fidelity in relationship to what has been heard, observed and learnt
 - An awareness and connection between logic of mind and feelings of heart
 - Listening and observing the self as well as in relationship to others
 - Acknowledgement that the researcher brings to the research his or her subjective self”
- (Wilson 2008, p. 59).

This guide can be used for any research, not just research done with Indigenous peoples.

Qualitative research is also about reciprocity and responsibility. All forms of research should be about listening and learning.

Indigenous methodologies help to make sure that research done with Indigenous people is carried out in a respectful and ethical manner. The methods that I chose to use need to be useful and beneficial to the community (Prosanger, 2004, Zinga et al, 2010). So how did I make this method useful and beneficial to the community? I did so by using a method of storywork. Archibald (2008) coined the term storywork as a result of her own research with Elders from her community. Elders taught Archibald about the seven principles related to First Nations stories; respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interconnectedness and synergy. These stories are usually based on experience and teachings. Storywork principles allow for one to use First Nations stories effectively (Archibald, 2008). It is important to honour and represent these community members through their stories. Knowledge is shared and transmitted through stories and storytelling is a legitimate way of sharing knowledge (Kovach, 2005, 2008). Storytelling is important in understanding human experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2006). Sharing experiences is an important part of this research journey. Storywork allows for the education of the heart, mind, body, and spirit (Archibald, 2008). As a non-aboriginal researcher I became a cultural learner. "A researcher who enters First Nations cultural context with little or no cultural knowledge is viewed as a learner" (Archibald, 2008, p. 37). As a cultural learner my role was to look, listen and learn (Archibald, 2008; Steinhauer, 2002). By looking, listening, and learning I had the opportunity to gain some skills, knowledge and understanding of the community and share this with others through storywork.

Sharing through storywork is important. Storytellers share their own experiences into the telling (Wilson, 2008). I am sharing the experiences of doing this research project with the Six Nations community as well as the academic community. But before I was able to share this information I had to learn about and incorporate the storywork principles into my writing. The storywork principles are: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy (Archibald, 2008). Archibald (2008) said that these seven principles helped her get to the core of making meaning through stories. I must share the cultural knowledge that I learned with respect, responsibility, reciprocity and reverence.

I embodied respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and reverence in all aspects of my research and have made sure that this research places the community first. Prior to being involved in any part of the research, I met not only with my advisor but also the Student Success Research Consortium and presented a proposal to them. After conversation and suggestions from the Consortium, I was given permission to complete this project with the community. Prior to my defense and the submission of this thesis, I presented my draft work to the Consortium and made edits based on the conversation and suggestions that occurred during that meeting. Knowing what one does with the knowledge during the research process is very important (Haig-Brown, 2010). This project is for and will belong to the community. Wilson (2008) says that researchers must make sure that three R's are guiding their research: Respect, Reciprocity and Relationality. As mentioned earlier, knowledge is seen as being relational and shared with all creation (Kovach, 2005, 2008; Steinhauer, 2002; Wilson, 2008). I will need to share this knowledge with others by incorporating these principles into my writing. "Sharing knowledge can be an empowering process" (Smith, 2005, p. 98). I was not only empowered by this process but was also able to see the community empower itself through this research process (Smith,

2005). Learning and sharing knowledge is the reason why I wanted to embark on this research journey. Using a combined methodology of autoethnography and Indigenous storywork was challenging, but it also allowed me to be creative and to critically engage in a research process that tries to balance these two worldviews.

Chapter Three: My Research Journey

Introduction

I cannot begin my autobiographical account of my learning journey without first looking at positionality. I became aware of the term positionality during my undergraduate degree. It was a term I had not really thought about before. In thinking about my positionality, I found it helpful to ask myself questions. What is my positionality? I realized that it was important to look at who you are as it makes a difference in the way we view the world. Who am I and why did I want to embark on this journey? I am a white middle class mother, wife and graduate student. Did I want to find out more about myself or did I want to learn about doing research? What did I want to get out of this experience? I was not really sure but I had to begin by looking back on what got me interested in this journey in the first place.

As an undergraduate student I took many courses that opened my eyes to the way I viewed the world. There were a few courses that introduced me to the terms positionality and whiteness. Why is this important to me and the way I view the world around me? Primarily because these courses and the concepts that I learned in the courses introduced me to the importance of knowing who I am and how my background has influenced the lenses through which I view the world. For example, as a white woman I may experience incidents of sexism but I will not face the same level of discrimination faced by women of colour and will often not be aware of the realities that those women face as those realities are not part of what I experience. In my third year of my undergraduate degree I took a course offered through the Child and Youth Studies Department called Race and Constructions of Race. In that course we read an article by Kendall (2006) entitled *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race*. In it Kendall posed questions that as a white person I had

not considered before like: "What is it like for you to be white?" and "How is your experience different from others because of your skin colour?" (Kendall, 2006. p. 2). I do not think that these are questions that white students think about unless they are prompted to do so.

The Professor took us out to the parking lot and we did a privilege walk. What is that you ask? Well we were given questions and had to take steps forward or backward depending on what was asked. An example would be if you grew up in a home owned by your parents take two steps forward. I did not because my parents could not afford to own a home until I was in my late teenage years. I was not sure what to expect from it. I had read Peggy McIntosh's *Invisible Knapsack* and I was expecting it to be a bit like that, but it was different. It brought up not only privileges that I have, but also privileges I did not have in my life. It was the privileges that I did not have that allowed me to feel fortunate for the privileges I have in my life today. I was taking steps forward until we got to growing up in a home owned by your parents. I grew up in a home that my parents rented because they could not afford to purchase a house. Experiences like the privilege walk that occurred during my undergraduate degree, made me realize that I did not think of my position, the privileges I had, or the assumptions that came with my positionality until I was made aware of it.

I began to research the idea of white privilege more and more. Peggy McIntosh (1988) wrote "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack". In it she discusses the privileges that white people carry around with them each day. Kendall (2006), like McIntosh (1988), says "we take our whiteness everywhere we go" (p.137). I never thought about it that way until I was introduced to it. I did not think of it because it was really invisible to me. "I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 1). You just go about each day without realizing how fortunate

you are to have certain privileges because of the colour of your skin or your socio-economic status. Many of us do not think outside of the box and just get trapped within the four corners of it. Maybe we should open the box up and start looking at new things, new ways to view the world, new ways to look at ourselves and embrace the other. We can never know what others are experiencing. We only know our own experiences. We can make changes by deconstructing ourselves and try to open to learning about the experiences of others and challenging our own assumptions based on what we learn from the sharing of experiences that are different from those associated with our own positionalities. It is essential to be open to the learning and sharing process and not to believe we know what the other is experiencing.

If we open ourselves up and deconstruct our own place of privilege and own experiences then maybe we can value and change the way we form relationships with the 'other'. (Krueger, 2008). Whiteness and White Privilege are not necessarily about skin colour (Skott-Myhre Personal Communication, October 14, 2008). Whiteness is about the practices, behaviours, language and ways of dressing. These certain things can give you access to privilege. In Western society engaging in these practices give us that privilege every day (Skott-Myhre, Personal Communication, October 14, 2008). If we deconstruct our own place of privilege then maybe we can open ourselves up to experiencing with others. How can transformations happen if we remain static and don't make any changes? Things don't stay the same. The world is changing every day and yet we still succumb to putting down those who are different from ourselves.

In order for us to transform the way we relate to others we need to free ourselves from the misconceptions and dominations that stand between us and the 'other'. "When we reduce the capacity of the "other" we reduce the capacity of ourselves" (Skott-Myhre, personal communication, January 25, 2010). Whenever we see or hear about the other we also see power

and control. The power and control that is there produces human differences. Those who are 'othered' are deemed powerless. Why? We are all human. We should all be treated equally, not better or less than. "The dominant Western conception of justice is rooted in a fundamentally individualistic, materialistic, ideal equity of sameness" (Alfred, 2009, p. 66). Why do we have to be the same? Differences make the world much more interesting. Why can't we collaborate and work together instead of this is my way or the highway! That is basically the idea of Western thought! Dr. Zinga explained it as a toddler's point of view 'Mine'. Everything belongs to me no matter what the cost. "Power in the Western sense involves imposition of an individual's will upon others" (Alfred, 2009, p. 71). Why do we as a white society not appreciate all that the earth has to offer us? Why do we turn a blind eye to other ways of knowing? Why was history about Aboriginal communities and cultures hidden from us? I am not sure if I will ever find the answers to all of these questions. I do know that I enjoyed learning about the history that was hidden from me. I want to find out more about the history of Aboriginal Peoples. I want to be able to learn more about Aboriginal culture, language and traditions. The Aboriginal peoples of Canada have so much to offer. We have discounted them for far too long. We need to share and learn together. Sharing and learning together is important because if we only view the world one way it closes so many other doors. We should take the opportunity to open doors that are closed to us. We should not be afraid to enter them; by entering these doors we can open our eyes to new experiences. We may not always like what we hear but who said learning was easy!

"Knowing is more about the journey than the destination" (Hatcher et al., 2009, p. 143). On the last day of the Indigenous children and youth class that I took as an undergrad with Professor Zinga she said "this subject is so complex and we have to choose where to go from here. We can choose to dip our toes in the water to see if it is cold or not. We may jump right in or we may

choose to walk in slowly” (D. Zinga, personal communication, April 7, 2010). I have chosen to walk in slowly and take in as much as I can about Aboriginal culture. There is so much more to know and I feel that taking it slowly allowed me to think critically and enjoy the journey!

My journey started with searching for the literature that would help support my thesis. What exactly was I going to do? I knew I wanted to write an autoethnography, but I also wanted to incorporate an Indigenous paradigm. I did not know much about Indigenous storytelling, but I knew it was an Indigenous research method that seemed to fit with the qualitative form of writing that I wanted to explore. But where would I begin? I started with Archibald (2008), Smith (1999) and Wilson (2008). Archibald's (2008) method of storywork sparked my interest as it would hopefully help me tie in the methodology that I wanted to do. Archibald (2008) says that storywork can be "a journey of learning" (p. 3). It certainly has been a journey of learning for me, and at times also a struggle. I have realized that there is much learning to be found in struggle. So I have made it through the struggles and here I am finally writing and sharing this journey with you. I would like to start with Jo-ann Archibald because her storywork had an impact on how I went about doing this research. Archibald 's book shows that storywork can be an important research method. "Sharing what one has learned is an important Indigenous tradition" (Archibald, 2008, p. 2). In the first chapter of her book she recounts the story of *The Coyote* as told by Tafoya Coyote is seen as one of the trickster characters in Aboriginal storytelling. Within the storytelling a trickster is a "metamorph" (Styres, 2011). The Coyote's metamorphosis is seen in many ways. As Styres (2011) states, "His metamorphosis occurs through various contexts- humour, farce, sarcasm, self-ridicule and the nonsensical" (Styres, 2011, p. 719). The trickster allows us to learn about life and how to be in relation with the other which is an important part of this research journey for me. I was intrigued by this story and

realized that it was going to be something that would be helpful informing the way I wanted to do this thesis.

Coyote's Eyes

Long time ago, when the mountains were the size of salmon eggs, Coyote was going along, and saw Rabbit was doing something. Now, this Rabbit was Twati, and Indian doctor, and as Coyote watched, Rabbit sang his spirit song, and the Rabbit's eyes flew out of his head and perched on a tree branch. Rabbit called out, "Whee-num, come here" and his eyes returned to their empty sockets. This greatly impressed Coyote, who immediately begged Rabbit to teach him to do this. Rabbit said no. Coyote begged. Rabbit said no. "Oh please," cried Coyote. "No," replied Rabbit. "But it's such a wonderful trick! Teach me." "No" "But I'll do exactly as you say!" "I will teach you," said the Rabbit, "but you must never do this more than four times a day, or something terrible will happen to you." And so Rabbit taught Coyote his spirit song, and soon Coyote's eyes flew up and perched on a tree. "Whee-num! Come here! Called the Coyote, and his eyes returned to him. Now Rabbit left, and Coyote kept practicing. he sent his eyes back and forth to the tree four times. then he thought, "I should show off this trick to the Human People, instead of doing it for myself." So Coyote went to the nearest village, and yelled out for all the people to gather around him. With his new audience, Coyote sang the Rabbit's song, and the crowd was very impressed to see his eyes fly out of his head and perch in the branch of a tree. "Whee-num!" Coyote called out. His eyes just sat on the tree and looked down at him. The Indian People started to laugh. "Come here!" shouted Coyote. His eyes just looked at him. Whee-num!" Just then a crow flew by, and spotting the eyes, thought they were berries. the crow swooped down and ate them. Now Coyote was blind, and staggered out of the village, hoping to find new eyes. He heard the sounds of running water, and felt around, trying to find the stream. Now, around flowing water, one finds bubbles, and Coyote tried to take these bubbles and use them for eyes. But bubbles soon pop and that's what Coyote discovered. Now Coyote felt around and discovered huckleberries, so he took those and used them for eyes. But the huckleberries are so dark, everything looked black. Now Coyote was really feeling sorry for himself. "Eenee snawai, I'm just pitiful", Coyote cried. "Why are you so sad?" asked a small voice, for little mouse had heard him. "My dear Cousin," said Coyote "I've lost my eyes...I'm blind and I don't know what to do." "Snawai Yunwai," replied the mouse. "you poor thing, I have two eyes, so I will share one with you." Having said this, the Mouse removed one of his eyes and handed it to Coyote. Now Coyotes eyes are much bigger than mice, and when Coyote dropped Mouse's eye into his socket, it just rolled around in the big empty space. The new eye was so small it only let in a tiny amount of light. It was looking at the world through a little whole. Coyote walked on still feeling sorry for himself, just barely able to get around with the mouse's eye. "Eenee snawai, I'm just pitiful," he sobbed. "Why are you crying Coyote?"

asked the Buffalo in his deep voice. "Oh Cousin," began the Coyote, "all I have to see with is this tiny eye of Mouse. It's so small it only lets in a little bit of light, so I can barely see." "Snawai Yunwai," replied the Buffalo. "you poor thing, I have two eyes, so I will share one with you." Then Buffalo took out one of his eyes and handed it to Coyote. Now Buffaloes eyes are much bigger than Coyotes, and when Coyote tried to squeeze the Buffalo's eye into his other socket, it hung over into the rest of his face. So large was Buffalo's eye that it let in so much light, Coyote was nearly blinded by the glare...everything looked twice as large as it ordinarily did. And so, Coyote was forced to continue his journey, staggering about with his mismatched eyes. (Tafoya, as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 9-10).

After reading this story I thought that it would relate well to how I wanted to go about this research project, but I began to question what the story really meant and if it would be suitable for me to use in my research. Once I read Archibald (2008) further I realized that it would be a suitable story for me to use. Archibald (2008) goes on to say how there are many meanings to this story. She discusses who Coyote is and how he relates to this legend. "Coyote, in his normal state represents a bit of everything. He must not be understood by only knowing one legend, but the contexts of many legends in which he and his counterparts in other tribes appear" (Archibald, 2008 p. 10). Tafoya says you need to be a whole person by learning how to switch back and forth between the eyes of all the animals from the legend (Archibald, 2008). Coyote struggles with his new eyes as he has not learned to balance them. I too continue to struggle with the two eyes, the eye of Western Knowledge (Buffalo's eye) as well as trying to learn more about eye of Indigenous Knowledge (Mouse's eye). A balance between these eyes would be ideal for this project. It is difficult to see out of a tiny eye when it is overshadowed by the larger one. I felt it would be important to try and balance these eyes (two world views) so that I would not just be a researcher but a cultural learner (Archibald, 2008). I have so much to learn on this journey and so much to learn after it is finished. So the research journey begins with research! Okay, perfect, I can do this.

I finally knew where I was going to start, or so I thought. The research process was not as easy as I had anticipated. It was difficult being a Non-Aboriginal research trying to do this research. I looked up more literature and became overwhelmed with all of the books and journal articles that I had found. I was not able to find research that would support what I wanted to do, that is, combine these two methods. It was too hard! I was ready to just give up. As I read further along in Archibald's book I came across another story; this story was just as intriguing as *The Coyote*. This story was called *Coyote Searching for the Bone Needle*.

Coyote Searching for the Bone Needle.

Old Man Coyote

Old man Coyote had just finished a long hard day of hunting. he decided to set up his camp for a night. After supper, he sat by the fire and rubbed his tired feet from the long days walk. He took his favourite moccasins out of his bag and noticed that there was a hole in the toe of one of them. He looked for his special bone needle to mend the moccasin but he couldn't find it in the bag. Old Man Coyote started to crawl on his hands and knees around the fire to see if he could see or feel the needle. Just then Owl came flying by and landed next to Old Man Coyote. He asked him what he was looking for. Old Man Coyote told the owl his problem . Owl said that he would help his friend look for the bone needle. After he made one swoop around the area of the fire, he told Old man Coyote that he didn't see the needle. Owl said that if it were around the fire then he would have spotted it. He then asked Old man Coyote where he last used the needle. Old Man Coyote said that he used it quite far away, over in the bushes, to mend his jacket. Then Owl asked Old man Coyote why he was searching for the needle around the campfire. Old man Coyote replied " Well, it's easier to look for the needle here because the fire gives off such good light , and I can see better here." (Eber Hampton's story shared by Archibald, 2008. p. 35-36).

After I read this story I was intrigued by the parallels that Archibald drew between herself and Old Man Coyote, in terms of how they both wanted their journeys to be easy. Archibald (2008) wanted research to be easy, she did not want to deal with the colonial history that came with doing this type of research. It was hard for her to question the motives and methods behind traditional research. I too, like Archibald (2008), had difficulty trying to figure

out how to go about Indigenous Research. The research for the literature review was hard or so I thought it was. Where do I begin and how do I find literature to support what I wanted to do? I was actually so fearful of not finding literature, I didn't. But after reading the story of Old Man Coyote I realized I had been looking only at the research that was easy to find. I did not want to step away from what I was comfortable with because I knew this research was not going to be easy. Very much like how Old Man Coyote and Archibald felt, I was afraid of stepping out of my comfort zone and did not want to venture any further than the fire. But eventually I did realize that I needed to venture from the fire. It was not an easy journey and I wanted so much to stay close to the fire, to my comfort zone.

I found so much literature over these past two years that I kept questioning if this type of research was best for me to do. Should I combine methods? Should I just stick to what I feel comfortable with? I believe now that this research was best for me to do because I have learned so much about myself, not only as a researcher but as a human being. Like Coyote the trickster I was constantly journeying, struggling and transforming (Styres, 2011).

The constant journeying, struggling and transforming came with a lot of tears. I was often feeling frustrated and at a loss when it came to figuring out exactly how I would go about writing this. Where do I begin? How do I decide what I want to do? I had a bit of an idea of doing an autoethnography about my experiences as an undergraduate researcher but I felt like there was more to it than that. I cannot just talk about me. This project would not be possible for me without my advisor and the community members of Six Nations. After reading and discussing my ideas with Dr. Zinga she suggested that I start reading some literature about what parenting looks like in reserve communities and how residential schooling has impacted Aboriginal communities across Canada. I felt that looking at these issues would be important, but how

could I be sure that these issues would actually come up in the focus groups? Would the community members present in the focus groups be willing to share their answers to these questions? I was eager to hear what the participants of the focus groups would say. The focus groups provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences of being Aboriginal and opened up the potential for non-Aboriginal individuals to be informed by those perspectives. Their voices also invoked many questions and changes in me not only as an MA student researcher but as a person.

My Research Journey

This journey has been a learning experience for me academically, emotionally and socially. I questioned so many things through this whole process. Have I chosen the right methodology? Will the methodology I chose be accepted by other academics? Why did I question what I was doing so often? I am not really sure. I definitively over think things and I have done that through this whole journey. It would be so easy if I could just sit and write and not look back, but I do. I still question everything I am doing while I write this. The best thing that I have done throughout this whole process was keep a journal. I did not have to sit and think about what I have been through because I documented it as I went along. Looking back at these journal entries gave me a chance to reflect upon just how much I have learned and how much more there is to learn.

I started this journey in the Fall of 2010 with my Faculty Advisor Dr. Dawn Zinga. I will be referring to Dr. Zinga as Dawn throughout this chapter as well as Chapter Four as this is what the members of the community called her during the focus groups. I observed that the when the community spoke to Dr. Zinga as “Dawn” this seemed to minimize the power differential between her as the principle investigator and the community members as participants

during the sessions. Dawn seemed to be seen as a partner in the research process. She was not only humble when doing research with the community but also honest, respectful and helpful (Kovach 2005). The community seemed to have respect for Dawn and to enjoy working with her. As a research assistant on this larger SSHRC funded research project, I not only had an opportunity to examine the research from my own perspective but also to observe Dawn and how she conducted research and worked with the community.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to observe and learn from her during this process. I would have not gotten through this journey without her support. Dawn is an academic who is very open and understanding. Her easy-going demeanor, knowledge and professionalism speaks volumes. The reassurance that she has given me each step of the way is the reason why I am completing this project. Just knowing Dawn and how she teaches, counsels and conducts research speaks volumes to why she is the principal investigator in this SSHRC funded project and I am thankful that she gave me the opportunity to do research with her as not only a graduate student but also as her research assistant.

I am going to focus on documenting my experiences of the focus groups and the associated processes. Focus groups are small group interviews that allow a researcher to collect large amounts of data in short periods of time (Esterberg, 2002). The focus groups conducted consisted of all female participants who were either mothers, aunties or grandmothers which enabled them to share with the others about their similar experiences. Focus groups can allow for members to build on each other's ideas and opinions (Esterberg, 2002; Stewart et al, 2007). The SSHRC research focused on exploring what individuals within the community thought about parenting within the Six Nations community. There were six focus groups overall. They took place from October 2010 to March 2012. Each session was facilitated by Dawn and attended by

Michelle (Six Nations Community Liaison) as well as myself (MA student and Researcher Assistant). Altogether there were 48 participants. The groups consisted of moms of various ages as well as sisters, aunties and grandmothers. We tried to distribute the groups evenly but some age groups were combined which I found made for interesting discussions between generations within these groups. After each focus group I came home and wrote about my experience in my journal. When referring to individuals within the focus groups, I used pseudonyms in my journal entries.

Journal entry on October 26, 2010

It was a new experience for me today. I was not sure what to expect. As a researcher I should have no expectations because the data is what I am there for. I did not know how it would unfold. What would a focus group on the Reserve be like? Would there be resistance because we are outsiders to the participants? I was feeling nervous and unsure of how it would unfold. Why? I am not sure. Something new and I felt anxious. Driving there with Dawn allowed for us to chat and ease my anxiety a bit. It really helps because Dawn is very laid back and makes me feel comfortable. When we arrived I had to help Dawn set up. A new experience for this technologically challenged MA student. It was fine, all I had to do was keep my eye on the video and sound throughout the focus group.

As I sat and listened to these teen Moms talk about their experiences I felt quite sad. I was sad to find out that they had limited access to social support in their community. Some even had limited support from their families. It really made me look at who I am and how I was fortunate to have an education, a job and family support when I was a young single Mom. I do not know what I would have done without that support. I can already see that I will be looking at who I am and who I was throughout this experience. I need to look at my positionality because it is the place of which I have come from. I was a young Mom who

was working for minimum wage and living at home with my family. I thought about what it would have been like to not have that, but I couldn't because I was not in that position. I also thought about my whiteness. Do I have privileges that the Moms in the group do not have? I believe that I do and I feel a bit ashamed about that. I feel ashamed because there is Métis in my family two generations back. It is never discussed in my family. I am not sure why. I grew up believing that I just had French Canadian from my paternal side of the family. I only found out about Métis ancestry from my father whose uncle told him a few years back. But whenever I ask questions about that part of our heritage it is swept under the rug. I really wish I knew more about it. I would love to embrace it. Here I am thinking how wonderful it would be to embrace that part of my heritage and there are so many Aboriginals who are ashamed of their ancestry. I am sure I may question this whole journey, possibly my whole life.

After this focus group I thought about trying to find out more about the Métis ancestry in my family. I wonder why this part of our heritage not embraced? How can I find out more when no one wants to talk about it? Is this something that is important to me right now? Should I make this part of my thesis? I feel as though that is going to be another journey that I will take when this academic journey is completed. This journey is about learning to do research. It was not going to be about me and my family ancestry. I wanted to go back to focus groups and listen and learn from what the women of the community had to share. It became important to me to be the cultural learner that I set out to be and think about the journey of exploring my ancestry later on. I wanted to get right back to attending the other focus groups and see what learning would unfold.

After we attended this focus group I could not wait to go to the next one, but I waited and waited and waited. Why? We had so many groups scheduled and then they seemed to keep getting cancelled. I realize that this may happen while doing research, but it seemed to happen so

often. Unfortunately there were many sad events that happened within the Six Nations community and led to some significant losses. These incidents were fresh on the minds and hearts of the community and because they involved youth it brought up issues that we were talking about in the focus groups. The community needed time to heal so that it did not overly influence their feelings in the focus groups. As partners in this research process it was important to remember that doing research in the community is about showing respect, reverence, relevance, relationship, and reciprocity (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Zinga et al, 2010). After the community had time to heal we started focus groups up once again.

Journal entry May 25, 2011 (Morning session)

Wow it was a busy day today. I had a lot of notes to make and a lot of information to take in. We had a morning group and an afternoon group. I kind of felt overwhelmed and I keep thinking about what it will be like to transcribe these focus groups when we are done. How long will it take? I am not the fastest at typing. I really want to do a good job for Dawn as I am not just an MA student learning how to do research but also how to put it all together in the end. The morning session was long and noisy. We had the focus group in a restaurant during breakfast hours so it was hard to hear what the ladies were saying at times. It was interesting though because I was able to hear the perspectives of not only mothers but aunties. Some aunties have children and some do not but they seem to have a big role in helping raise children in their families and seem to be a support for their siblings with children. I felt as though these young moms and aunties really cared not only about their own children but the children in the community. Working together to raise children seems to be very important to many of these ladies. I just feel so intrigued by the warmth and caring they have for the children and youth on the Reserve. There seems to be so many struggles but yet these ladies seem to want to be there and build a stronger sense of family and community. Where does

this community begin when it comes to promoting the well being of the people who live there or have family there?

Journal entry May 25, 2011 (Afternoon session)

After I attended the focus group I can't help but to think about the struggles some of these mothers have gone through. Each participant had different experiences and yet they all seemed to just want the very same things for their children and grandchildren. They each discussed the struggles that they have had in their lives not only as parents but also the experiences they had as children and young people themselves. It seemed as though each mom had to share her stories to either make sense or understand the others stories. It helped me understand how important it is to know the experiences of others and how each one of us may seem to be so different but when it comes to being a mother. This group felt like a parent support group. A group that needed to just be able to share and support one another as mothers. I was taken aback by some of their experiences; especially the women who had grown children and what they had gone through with them (drug abuse, stealing, prison, no paternal support). I have heard about and read literature on the issues that Aboriginal youth on and off reserve struggle with, but I was actually hearing about it from the moms themselves and how difficult their struggle with parenting has been. One thing that surprised me was the idea that some children, young people and adults have never experienced life off Reserve (day trips etc). I enjoy the reality of this research. It is the real experiences that come from the community that seem to give me a better understanding of what parenting is like on the Reserve. It allows me to learn firsthand how much more of a struggle it is to parent when faced with the history and challenges of the people on this Reserve. There needs to be support with parenting and how to parent traditionally. The one thing that I have noticed so far with these first three groups is the love that they have for their children and the concern that they have for the other children in the community. I am able to hear firsthand how there needs to be more offered to the children and youth at Six Nations. I see firsthand that

there are members of the community that care and want the best for all of the children on the Reserve. I really enjoyed meeting and listening to the experiences of these women today.

Journal entry June 14th 2011

As I sat in the living room waiting for Dawn to start I noticed how beautiful the view was from the window and how it seemed to feel right being there at that moment. I was not sure why I felt that way; I just did. The presence of these women just seemed to make me want to sit with them all night long. My mind was like a sponge during this focus group. I took in every word, every story and every meaning of their stories. There seemed to be so much knowledge and wisdom. I learned so much listening to them and would love to be able to spend time with these women again. They hold so much history in terms of the traditions and languages of their culture. History is so important. How else can we learn about how things were without the input from these women? Denise had great wisdom in her stories and her words. You can tell she really cares about what happens not only to her children and grandchildren but the children in the community. I could understand what she was saying in her stories. I could almost feel the sadness and disappointment in some of her stories but also the joy that she felt as a child and as a mother and grandmother. Diane also had great wisdom in what she was sharing. Diane and Denise had many things to say about women, motherhood, sadness, pride... I enjoyed the story of cycles of the moon and a women's reproductive cycle. It made sense to me. Look at all the science that we have and we do learn from it but there is also so much to learn from the Earth and the moon, the other planets as well as our place here. Diane and Danielle also touched on the medicine that is used to get ready for childbirth and how there was none of the baby blues or post partum depression back then. They used traditional medicine with pregnant women and things went on fine from there. I felt as though I would have loved to have these women in my life with all of the knowledge they have to offer. These women had quite an impact on me. I will never forget the things they have said and how it really opened up to the way I see so many things. I am thinking

about things differently just from the stories that they shared. Dora had some great advice for families and I think it is important to all families: "So you have got to make time for your family as a unit, to talk, everybody: uncles, grandfathers and your aunts. All of those things. You've got to communicate".

This focus group was almost three hours long and there was so much being said. Dawn and I discussed how amazing these women were on our drive back home. Dawn said: "I don't know about you but I am feeling ashamed of being white right now." I replied "Me too." I really did feel bad about how white people have treated the Aboriginal Peoples of this country. How did this happen? How did we let it happen? Hearing the other side of history hurts but it is reality. The impact of that history on the Aboriginal communities has destroyed so many lives, so many traditions and the loss of so many people. You cannot know or understand the present without knowing the past. How can you build a future without knowing the past? How do we change this cycle? So many questions and no answers. The community seems to be at a loss and unsure of how to deal with the pain and destruction. These women were so full of wisdom, laughter and life. Each of the women opened up about their own histories and circumstances in their lives that made them who they are today. They are aware of the impact that colonization and residential schooling has had on their peoples and that it is frustrating to help the youth find their way. They know of the problems and they want to be able to help change things for the better. You could sense their frustrations and that it is hard for them to know where to go from here. I think it would be wonderful to have a youth and elders group to bring together the community and open up the eyes of the old and young. It is important for the youth in this community to learn about their history, traditions, and their people and to be proud of it. At the same time I feel that the elders would also benefit from learning from the youth themselves and the places that they come from. The world has changed with technology. Technology is an important part of their lives today and so is knowing their history and their elders. There needs to be a way to bring these two age groups together. Traditions and languages need to be passed on. Maybe

technology can be a way to do this. Maybe the youth can make videos interviewing the elders in the community or in their families to allow for the history to be shared. It could be a way for their traditions and languages to be passed on. The idea of the videos with youth and elders has been done before up North. I watched a documentary in Dawn's Indigenous Children and Youth course that gave cameras to the youth of the community and they interviewed and videotaped their Elders. I think it is a wonderful way to have that knowledge to hold on to and pass down to their families and communities. Learning from one another is such a wonderful way to know about who you are. I would have loved to have been told about the Aboriginal ancestry in my family. That was swept under a rug and never shared with me. I would love to embrace that part of my history. Maybe that is why I am so intrigued to learn about all of this. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of these focus groups.

I have been given the opportunity to learn from the Six Nations community and it has changed the way I see the world; the way I see the Aboriginal community. There is so much work to be done and so much that we need to do to assist Aboriginal communities in getting back what they have lost. You cannot take away their losses but we can assist in building a more positive future together. I know I want to be a part of that. I want to learn more about what the Elders have to offer. I was so intrigued by these ladies and their wisdom. It made me realize how important these Elders are to the future of their communities as well as ours. I think we have got to make time for each other whether we are family or not, no matter the colour of our skin, religion or the places we come from. We need to make time to start building relationships and respecting all of the wonderful people and things living on this earth.

As you can see by this journal entry this group had a huge impact on me. I was struggling with all of my thoughts and emotions. I was given the opportunity to listen to these strong women. For the first time during this research journey I really felt like I was able to relate to what I had read about doing research in the community. I felt like I understood what Wilson

(2008) stated in *Research as Ceremony*. "Knowledge is shared with all creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, or just with research subjects. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the concept of relational knowledge... you are answerable to all your relations when doing research" (Wilson, 2008, p. 56-57). I had the opportunity to hear these women share all of this with me. I was able to feel that knowledge is shared with all creation. I often sit and wonder about all of it but I have never ever really made a connection to it and at the moment of that focus group I was able to feel that. I feel it now as I read this journal entry again. I finally feel it; I have become a cultural learner as discussed within Archibald's (2008) work. I know that I could not wait until the next group after this one because I felt so inspired and realized that this experience was already changing me.

Unfortunately the next focus group was a long time coming. Following the session with the four women, there were a series of unfortunate occurrences that happened in the community and there needed to be time for healing. I was saddened once again by the realities and losses that affect this community. I could not wait to start focus groups again because I wanted to start transcribing and completing my project, but as I had learned in our research methods class you never know where research will take you or how many obstacles and hurdles you may face. It had already taken me so far and I knew there was going to be more to this journey.

Journal entry February 22, 2012

The focus group that we had this evening was full of information that was not covered as much in some of the other groups. The women varied in age from young Moms in their mid twenties, aunties, sisters, grandmothers. I found the discussion on discipline quite interesting and would like to learn more

about the red whip. The Elders from last June also touched on red whip but as it is used in a bath to calm children down. I would like to hear more about this method and how quickly it seems to ease a child. Focus group two from March discussed how red whip was chosen and used on them as a form of discipline. I wonder if there are different ways of using red whip because there are Six different Nations on this Reserve and many different ways to go about discipline children. This seems to not happen as much because CAS has put a stop to traditional discipline. Many of the parenting groups offered are all mainstream and not traditional. Why? This seems to make more of a disconnect culturally when it comes to traditional parenting. I do not believe that some of these traditions should be taken away. This group brought about awareness of the poverty that exist within families on the Reserve. Many families are struggling to survive day to day. It was said that a mother of five receives \$900/month. How can you survive off of that? Some children are not doing well in school due to lack of nutrition at home. How can they concentrate if they are hungry all of the time? The cycle of welfare is hard to break on the reserve because to some it is seen as a normal way of life. This really broke my heart. How can these families find a way out? Why do you hear about this happening on many First Nation Reserves? How can we stop this cycle? Like one of the participants said how can we try and help families overcome the barriers that exist on this Reserve? There are services offered but many do not choose to use them. A lot of people do not want to be part of the gossip and do not want others to see them using the services. It seems as though there is oppression happening by others on the Reserve. When Dawn and Michelle asked about success my heart broke when the participants said success is being alive, being in a home and having food on the table. This honestly makes my stomach hurt, but it is a reality. I have read about these issues in many research articles but to be on the Reserve and hear it firsthand from the community makes it really hit home. There are so many problems and issues that exist that I can understand how it has not been fixed in a day, a week, a month or even a year. It has been years of devastation and years to try and fix. I really find it difficult to accept that these problems came about hundreds of years ago and still exist today. The hardest part about this

research is knowing the reality of the lives of the Aboriginal Peoples in our country and the struggles they face every day.

Journal entry March 30, 2012

This group was the smallest group but they had a lot to share. I was surprised at the ages of these Mothers. To me they were so young. I could not imagine having a baby so young. I thought that I was young when I had my daughter at twenty two. I do not know what I would do having a child as young as these Moms. I listened to these young women talk about how young they were when they had their babies. They seemed like babies to me. Maybe babies is the wrong term to use. I am not sure. I just felt like they really needed positive female role models in their lives. They needed to feel confident in their mothering abilities. They were young but they were also mothers. I quickly realized as each one spoke that yes they were young but at the same time they showed maturity when talking about how much they loved their children and want what is best for them. We hear so many negative discourses that circulate about young Aboriginal mothers like they just want to live off welfare; They don't know how to parent. etc.,. But what I saw during this focus group were young mothers who do not want to make the same mistakes that their mothers made. They want to try and give their children the best of life that they can; which seemed to be difficult considering the lack of housing, parenting programs, the ridicule that they feel they get from their own families, friends and others in the community. It is hard not to feel emotional when I hear these stories. There are supportive families and members of the community and then there are those that don't want to bother or start oppressing their own friends and family members. Why? So many years of assimilation and oppression? How can you fix hundreds of years of this? There is so much to build within the community. I often question why things are the way they are. Why can't we just stop all of this oppression and start working together as a country to support the people who live here. It is a cycle that needs to be broken.

The data from this chapter was just a part of this long journey. I read a lot about being reflexive during this process. I think I was very reflective in my journal entries. I would come home from each group and just write. I notice when I look back on these entries that it was an intensive journey for me. I did a lot of reflecting, deconstructing, crying, questioning, and learning. Kovach (2008) states that reflexivity was an intensive journey for her as well. "As a reflexivity method of research, situating the self authorizes expression of the relevant narrative from personal experiences, those reminiscences of life rooted in our earliest experience that shape our understanding of the world" (Kovach, 2008, p. 112). I looked back on my own history and realized that it plays a big part of who I am and how I view the world but it also made me realize that being able to experience a different world view adds to who I am. It changed me. The community members sharing what they shared changed me. Incorporating the voices of the community is important because it let me see and hear what the people of the community are like and how they feel. It allowed me to open my heart and mind so that I could learn. It allowed me to be that cultural learner and feel the amazing presence of each one of these unique individuals. Journaling these groups gave me a chance to look back and reflect on how much I have learned and how much more there is to learn. I was able to see that it was just the beginning of my journey and that my journal entries were not the only part of this but that the community of Six Nations was the biggest part of this whole research process. I cannot finish with just my thoughts, feelings and experiences. I need to share the voices of the community in this project because the project was with and about the community. What do they feel? What do they think is needed to support the children and youth at Six Nations? What is parenting like and how does it feel to be a parent? What do parents think their children need to be successful? And so the next

chapter is devoted to the voices of the community members and honours what they chose to share during the research.

Chapter Four: Voices of the Community

In this chapter, I draw upon and honour the 48 participants who chose to share their understandings and experiences of parenting and being parented with the research team. With 48 participants there comes a lot of data. The groups consisted of moms of various ages as well as sisters, aunties and grandmothers. We tried to distribute the groups evenly but some age groups were combined and the combination illustrated differences between generations as well as some similarities. The uniqueness of this chapter is that you will have an opportunity to see what the participants had to say about their children, parenting, family, success, community, language, culture and respect. Specifically, the chapter does this in two distinct parts. In the first part, I introduce and explore common themes that emerged out of the six focus groups. In part two, I share stories told by Elders in the community who have their own distinctions in the Six Nations community as knowledge keeper, language keeper or clan mother. This group shared stories that seem to offer some different themes and perspectives on the issues within their community. It should be noted that as the focus groups were part of a larger research study, the women's responses were influenced by the questions that were asked across all of the focus groups by the principle investigator of the primary research study. In analyzing the focus groups, I considered the themes within the focus groups that were directly related to the focus group questions as well as themes that emerged out of the group discussions.

Part One

This part of the chapter will discuss all six focus groups. Dawn asked many questions in regards to parenting, family and success. The focus groups typically went from one hour to three hours and generated an enormous amount of data. After transcribing I went through the

transcripts to try and make sense out of the data. The focus groups and my journal entries were all in chronological order and it was just a matter of going through each one to weed out the commonalities and differences. I used different colours to code the common themes (Esterberg, 2002). The majority of these themes arose from the questions asked by the principal investigator. The following are the themes that emerged throughout the focus group sessions: 1) What does parenting look like?; 2) Traditional Parenting and Importance of Family; 3) Fathers 4) Success as a Parent; and 5) Community Involvement and support.

Focus Groups: Fall 2010-Spring 2012.

The focus groups took place from Fall of 2010 to Spring of 2012. The atmosphere for each group was always warm and welcoming. We had a focus group within a day care centre when we met with the young moms so that there was child care available for their little ones. Three groups in the conference room of the Six Nations Police Department where we enjoyed lunches and a dinner together. One of our groups was held at a community restaurant where we shared breakfast. The Elders focus group was held in the home of our Six Nations Liaison where we had dinner together. All of the focus groups were held on Six Nations land where the participants welcomed one another in a reciprocal demonstration of respect. This also gives us the opportunity to work together with the participants in a place that is warm, inviting, intimate and close to the land (Student Success Research Consortium, 2010). The land then becomes a place for participants to be reflective and engage with one another as well as the researcher. At each gathering Dawn would strike up conversations with the moms. She would talk about her own children and her experiences with them. It seemed to make the moms comfortable and some shared their parenting experiences before we started the focus group sessions. Dawn began with introductions and explained our roles and the rationale behind all of us gathered together. Dawn

said we would be exploring the issues of parenting at Six Nations. Once all of the logistics were out of the way Dawn would begin by talking about parenting at Six Nations.

Parenting

Dawn always started each group by saying how every community is different. Every family is different the way you were raised, your background; so we want to talk about your thoughts on what parenting looks like at Six Nations. Many participants indicated that the way you parent has a lot to do with the way you were raised. One said "You are the product of the environment you are raised in." Another said "Sometimes we even learn from our own parents' mistakes." Others agreed with that but continued on to say that "parenting around here is messed up." They discussed their perceptions that there seems to be many parents on the reserve who lack motivation and involvement with their children. One auntie said "Many parents are lazy with parenting and it shows in their children." Some of the older mothers who have grown children said that there seems to be a lack of discipline these days. One went on to say: "The legal system does not help. The judicial system took away the right to discipline your child out of your hands. If parents could raise their kids the way they should then there would not be so many angry parents and kids." The younger and older moms seem to all agree that there is a great lack of respect towards parents and Elders. "Many youth are disrespectful to parents. You don't treat your parents like that." A few of the ladies indicated that many children are being raised by their grandparents. "There are so many young parents here; like under twenty." It becomes a big problem because grandparents are raising grandchildren." They see many grandparents who are lenient with their grandchildren. One participant said "Grandparents let them get away with more. There is a huge lack of discipline around here." The participants seemed to be very concerned with the lack of discipline and the way that Elders are treated. One mother said "We

were taught that even if we did not agree with what our Elders said; we don't say anything back." It seems that the groups felt strongly about respect and discipline. "We were taught to respect our Elders; you don't see that much around here anymore."

A few of the moms thought that the lack of respect came from the lack of discipline. Some of the women said that there was a lack of physical punishment, as one said, "They don't want you to hit your kids anymore; no lickin's anymore. Not a beating a spanking." Another said, "Spankings are good. My kids turned out fine" A few of the others said that "You need to discipline out of love, not anger because anger can control your emotions. You have to stay calm." Staying calm seems to be important in terms of raising children on the reserve. The Elders also mentioned that "we only ever see the bad in our children not the good." It is important to see the good in them. "We overlook that; like we only talk to them when they are only doing something that they shouldn't be doing. We don't give them enough praise." In every group respect and discipline seemed to always come up when discussing parenting. Dawn always seemed to be right on cue when it was time to bring up the question on traditional parenting. Dawn would take that cue from the discussion on respect and discipline and lead into the question on traditional parenting.

Traditional Parenting, Family and Discipline

Dawn would ask the participants about traditional parenting. A majority of the moms agreed when one of them said "Traditional parenting is about having children help around the house." The moms young and old said that helping out was always an important part of family "We had to do chores every day. We had to help out around the house. We had to do everything because my mother worked, my father worked. Our grandmother stayed at home with us."

Another said that they did not have a father at home "My Mom was strict. There were always chores; we had to be responsible and respectful. If we did not respect Mom our uncles would step in. If uncles stepped in then you had gone too far." One young mom said respect is important; "Like my family was brought up like to respect people. We respect people. We don't talk back to our Elders no matter what. Like you hold your tongue. Like it doesn't matter how rude they are." Showing respect and watching out for one another was also seen as being an important tradition.

Respect for one another and discipline were an important part of how traditional parenting was taught. Many of the women discussed the difficulty of using traditional parenting practices such as red whip and water. "Some families are like even right on with traditional discipline. Many use the water in their face and everything". Red whip has also been used different ways on the reserve. Red whip is a bush known as red osier dogwood or red willow (Wonderley, 2010). Some women from the focus group referred to it as being used as a form of physical discipline and others say you are suppose to use it to bath and soothe a child who was upset or out of control. Many of the older moms remember having to go into the bush and pick their own red whip and bring it home to their parent. Wonderley (2010) says that an osier (red whip) concept that is still alive and well today is that red willow is used to correct unruly children (Wonderley, 2010). Whipping with such a red willow switch (red whip) is seen as more of a cure than a punishment (Wonderley, 2010). A few ladies said "Red whip is used only when you really need it. You have to have good intentions and follow through when disciplining your children." Sometimes moms would go into the bush lay down tobacco and pick the red whip themselves and ask the creator to help. Tobacco is a sacred gift:

"Tobacco is one of the sacred gifts the Creator gave to the First Nations people. Tobacco has been used traditionally in ceremonies, rituals and prayer for

thousands of years for its powerful spiritual meaning. Tobacco has a variety of medicinal purposes. Tobacco establishes a direct communication link between a person and the spiritual world." (http://www.sicc.sk.ca/elders_faq.html).

Dawn said that it is interesting; traditionally picking the red whip would allow time to become calm after picking it and laying down the tobacco. "Yes it gave you time to think. That is how my mother told me to do it." One of the ladies from the Elders group explained red whip a bit differently:

"And when they get so big a lot of people say "oh yeah, use the red whip". While I was never told that! I was told it was medicine for them. I was told you bath them in these red whips. You take it right from here (pointing to top of head) and you take it all the way down here (moving hands down body), because something is bothering them that is why you bath them in it. This thing here will help it them ease their mind. A lot of the people I hear them. The old people say I used that red whip (gesturing whipping someone). I don't know I never heard of that. That is something that really is the last thing because you are suppose to talk and explain to them."

Other women in the groups said that it is difficult to use traditional ways of disciplining because the Children's Aid Society (CAS) gets involved. Another older mom said "Initially we disciplined the way that we were taught. Parenting is more mainstream nowadays because of the involvement with CAS." Many still do not use the old ways of discipline but the ones that choose do find it is difficult. Many of the mothers say that they use grounding or taking things away from their children as a form of discipline. "It is really hard these days to discipline our children." It is as if they are stuck between mainstream parenting and the traditional ways of parenting that they were shown.

A few of the moms said traditional parenting practices around discipline were important to them, but all agreed that they valued the importance of traditional parenting that involved extended family support and love within families. Traditionally, parents did not parent alone but had the support of aunties, grandmothers, and other extended family. Each mom said that they

love their kids so much but the moms varied as to whether or not they had family support. Those that had family support talked a lot about the importance of family being there for them. Those moms who did not have supportive extended family spoke about how they created that family support for themselves. As one mom said, "We have our families. They might not always be blood but we have our own families." Many of the younger Moms feel a sense of loss within their own families but they treat their friends like family. "We always have each other's backs." They seem to spend time together and support each other just as some families do. Another mom talked about how she and some other young moms had formed a group that acted like a family, and indicated that "You always watch out for one another." Watching out for one another was another traditional parenting value that moms talked about instilling in their children. Many parents and siblings tell the younger children to always watch out for each other. "Like with bullying we tell them to; it's important to watch out for each other. Don't go against each other. You are with each other." This traditional value of extended family support and watching out for one another went hand in hand with another traditional value, that of spending time with family.

The moms talked about the importance of spending time together as an extended family and spoke about their experiences growing up and their current experiences. There are many families that still have gatherings; some almost every day. A few of the moms had examples from their own families to share about this: "It was and still is important to be involved with family; sisters, brothers, parents, grandparents aunts and uncles." Some families do day trips and vacations together and others find time to just hang out together. One young mom said: "We always had walks in the bush with extended family and immediate family as a kid" A few said they even get together for family dinners as adults with their children. "We always have family dinners." Using traditional language seemed to be something that a few of these moms

remembered doing and still do when the family gathers; as one mom said, "As a kid I would listen to Elders talk Mohawk." Another mom described how her family talks in Cayuga when they eat as a family. Sharing time, food and language is important to many of the families. All of these women find family important to their lives and want what is best for their children.

Dads

Many of the moms were single in the younger groups. These moms felt that there was a lack of support from their baby's fathers. Some of them don't understand why the fathers are not involved with their children. "I don't understand why the dads don't care or have relationships with their kids." Another said "We are given a harder time than them" (meaning the dads). Two women from focus group two said that "A lot of fathers aren't involved." "A lot of the fathers are drinking. It is the mothers that really do everything." Dawn asked: Is that cultural or is that just the way it happened? A few replied: "That is just the way it is in this culture" Michelle: I want to ask something. We have talked a lot. Everybody I approached it's been moms. What about the fathers? What's the role in parenting that they play? What are the roles in your families? A couple of moms from group three responded with "Well, they are just a baby daddy. That's all they are. That's all my boy's dad is. He's dad in name only." Another mom responds, "He's their donor." Another mom said, "it is hard. My youngest met his dad to remember him when he was four. He went over there for Christmas that year. That's the last time he's seen him. He is ten now." Dawn asked: And why are there so many dads who are just "Baby Daddies"? One young mom makes a gesture with her hands as if she does not know and then says: "You've got to ask them that."

A couple of younger Moms said that the fathers help out. "Like so I did it for three years. and he is here now so he can do it for a week." Another said: "When my kids are with their dad

they know they listen, they have a great time." One mom described how her children's father was involved even when he was away for a while and indicated that her children could call their dad whenever they wanted to. She also said, "Now that he is back here close to home they love it. They always listen to him." A couple of the ladies from the older group said that "My mother chose to move away so she left and my dad he took care of us." Another Elder said that she told her sons, "you get married, you have kids, you look after those kids. You stay there and look after those kids. I don't care what you got to go through; you stay there and look after them." Another Elder said that one her boys is a single parent and he's been a single parent for a few years. It was important to hear this because in the first couple of groups I got the sense that there were not many connections between single fathers and their children. I was only hearing certain points of view and it is important to know that there are single fathers who are a part of their children's lives. From all of the literature that I have read it seems that there is a lack of literature showing support from fathers within First Nation communities so it was good to hear another perspective.

Success

When the focus groups shifted from traditional parenting and the family's role to a focus on success, the moms were asked to define success and consider how parents can support their children's' academic success. Many of the moms responded by describing what success meant to them as follows:

"Success is for my kids to be healthy, happy and have an education."; "Success is that my children know right from wrong."; "I want my children to feel good about themselves"; "Having your child go to school and want to be there"; "Being unsuccessful is not finishing grade 12."

In terms of supporting their children in school moms offered the following types of responses:

"Talk about our own experiences with our children so that they understand where we are coming from"; "Show your kids that you care"; "Don't leave your kids"; "support them"; "Talk to teachers about family problems. Have parent/teacher interviews."

The moms talked about what they wanted for their children. One mom said "yeah education is important. I want my kids to finish school with a good education." All of the moms who participated agreed that they wanted their children to get a good education.

Overall the moms indicated that they want their kids to be healthy, happy and have a good education but stressed the difficulty in getting a good education. Several moms spoke about the difficulty in getting homework support and indicated that there is not much support from schools in the community. Many said they want their kids to go off reserve to attend school as they felt that attending school outside the community would increase the chances that their children would finish school. Several moms indicated that finishing school did not happen as much as it should in the community. Another mom stepped in and said, "It is easier to finish school if you get a scholarship especially if you play lacrosse and hockey" It seems as though there are more opportunities for kids if they participate in sports, but what about the kids that don't?

The moms offered other thoughts about success and the associated struggles to reach it. The moms shared the following types of thoughts: "You are successful as a parent if your children are happy and do things that we ourselves could not do."; "You want to see your children successful. You want them to do better."; "You want to drive them to work hard to break this cycle."; "Schools need to educate better. Some of our kids still can't read!"; "It's hard, it's really hard". There are so many challenges that looking at success for their kids can be difficult, especially for some families that struggle day to day. It seems as though more supports need to

be in place to help some of the families and their children become more successful. It seems like many of these young moms really want to try and give their children better lives, but they cannot do it alone. There needs to be a way to link family, school and community.

Community Involvement and Support

The moms were also asked to consider what supports were available in the community. Many moms indicated that a lot of programs offered within the community are mainstream and not traditional while other spoke about traditional programming and the wide range of resources that are available. It was clear that there was a big disconnect. Some moms don't know where to find help or choose not to get it. Many of the young moms felt that there needs to be more offered to them and their children in the community. Other moms who also worked as service providers spoke about how difficult it was to plan programs and not have anyone show up for the program. Moms indicated that being on welfare on or off reserve was hard. A few of the young moms felt like there is not enough support for them on the reserve. One young mom said, "There is nothing for us. I would love to win money and open up a place for single Moms." A couple of the moms mentioned a program that was available called "Healthy Babies" on the reserve, but felt that there was not as much offered as there is on the New Credit Reserve which is just south of Six Nations. A few of these young moms agreed and one even said that

"There is much more offered at New Credit than at Six Nations; I take parenting courses there. They also offer infant CPR, first aid, sign language, crafts for moms like scrapbooking. New Credit healthy babies program helps with groceries, car seats and even craft classes I can experience with my daughter. Healthy Babies at Six Nations does not offer much. They have a Moms and Tots program but hard to get to".

Another agreed and said, "Everything is too spread out here. It is too hard to get around." In contrast another mom indicated that the community offered a lot when she said, "They have a lot

of community stuff to do. They give you free car seats and there is stuff for Christmas. Like there is a place that you can go for five bucks and get a whole bunch of food for the week." Another mom indicated that, "If you've got babies they will give you diapers and all that stuff. I think the community helps." Others indicated that they thought "the community helps to an extent." It seemed that some moms think there is sufficient services while others do not and that moms varied in terms of their knowledge of available services and how accessible they thought the services were within the community.

Many of the moms felt that there was just not enough support for them on the reserve. A young mom from the first focus group said "Housing is difficult to find on the Reserve". Another young mom from group six said "There is not even a decent cheap place, like you know what I mean?" Another young mom from focus group one said: "When you are on welfare you try to find a way off or out and you can't because they kick you at your lowest here. There is no one to help us". This young mom was brought to tears while saying this. Others shook their heads in agreement. "There is no cheap rent and we've got kids." Dawn asked how do you find places? Many of the girls said you find places by word of mouth or if you know people like friends or family. "Like you've got to know people and if you don't you're shit out of luck". They agree that it is hard to find places to live. "I know a lot of people that have moved off the Reserve lately because there is no place on the Reserve." Dawn continued on by asking what would make it easier to stay in the community? What kind of things would you need in place? "Well houses, like places to live like everyone would be together eh." With lack of housing, programming and transportation it is hard for these moms to get the support that they need.

The younger moms seem to really be affected by this situation the most. They feel like there is no one to turn to sometimes. There were a few moms that work in the community and

some off reserve and they said that it is difficult for some of the young moms to overcome the barriers and criticism that they face. One young mom said, "People from the community are watching you and criticizing you all the time" Yeah, just by little stuff too like they think they can raise your baby better than you can." They not only feel a lack of support from their community, but some feel it from their families as well. "You can't even count on your own family" Another mentioned that even family want money from you and she indicated that, "Once we pay my boyfriend's mother for rent we barely have enough to survive." Some of these young moms wish for more support from the community and their families. There are others who have support from families and feel that they do not know where they would be without that support. Many of them do not want to go off reserve but have no choice because they cannot find places to live. One young mom said that, "I want to stay on rez because the language and everything is here. The Longhouse is here and people you know your whole life is here." While another stated, "This is home!"

When asked about the best ways of getting information out about available programming, the moms had several suggestions. One mom stated, "I guess advertise more is all I can say" and another agreed saying,

"Just try and get everything out there like to everybody not just all of the information in Oshweken. But it has to be the whole reserve to find out about stuff." Some moms indicated particular mediums such as "I think what helps to is the mailboxes getting flyers and stuff." or "mail, radio whatever."

Some moms talked about flyers and described how their kids would get them from school or bring them home from a notice board but other moms spoke about having limited transportation and not being able to get access to posted flyers. Several moms and aunties brought up facebook

as a way of getting the word out about resources and events. One mom mentioned that they use to have a youth dance or group and it was always posted on facebook.

An auntie said, "I always tell my nephew about everything that they do too." Another young mom says "yeah, no one reads the newspaper or bulletin boards or anything anymore." It seems as though the moms all had good ideas for getting the info out there. Utilizing facebook, flyers, bulletin boards, even schools can all be helpful and useful ways to get information out to the parents.

Summary

The younger and older women in these focus groups shared some personal stories, ideas and genuine care for the children and families in the community. They talked of their struggles as mothers and as community members. They all seemed to reach out and support each other as they shared their thoughts and stories during the focus groups. The women young and old talked of the importance of their languages, culture and traditions. This seems to be something they would like to see throughout the community not just within schools but within families and the overall community. They would like to see services improve for families on the reserve. Housing seemed to be an important issue for the younger moms who want to be close to services, family and friends. They had many ideas on what kind of services would be beneficial as well as how to get the information out to the community. I think small steps like this can help open the doors to new services and bring about awareness to those services that are already in the community. Having the voices of these women heard is going to hopefully lead to this. In the next part of this chapter the voices of the Elders will be heard. They also discuss and bring about awareness to the issues in the community as well as the things that the community have lost.

Part 2

It was difficult for me trying to figure out how to introduce the Elders focus group into this chapter. The women in this group are Elders and while participants in the focus groups referred to Elders in a general sense in their conversations, the women who participated in the focus group had particular roles and were not referred to as “Elders” but according to their roles. Each of these women has a role as a clan mother, knowledge keeper and/or language keeper. A Clan Mother is important in Haudenosaunee culture. Clan mothers work with the chiefs in decision-making for their people. They have a duty to make sure that the way of life for their people continues (onondaganation.org, 2012). Knowledge Keepers have a role in the preservation, promotion and influence of the knowledge that is developed and nurtured in the community (www.snpolytechnic.com, 2012). Language Keepers are like knowledge keepers they work to preserve and promote the language in their community. "The loss of our languages means a weakening of First Nations cultural values, traditions, worldviews, family relationships and relationships to the environment and the land." (www.sicc.sk.ca, 2012). Each of these women has a role in their community and are looked upon with great respect. As I said in my journal entry for this group, hearing what these women had to share had quite an impact on me. The other focus groups were impactful as well but this one was different. I felt different. Dawn also began this group a bit differently than the others. The way she posed the question gave these women an opportunity to just share their thoughts on parenting, family, culture and language. The women all shared. They shared many things with us during this group. They shared things about their past, their present and the future. These women spoke about their families, their community, their languages, their culture and traditions with great respect and genuine concern. I will include their stories below and I only hope that you can get a sense of these women and the love and concern that they have for the future of their community. We will start with Denise.

Denise had a lot to say about what she sees in the community and feels about the importance of the language, praise and guidance that the children and young people in the community need.

"I speak Mohawk. When you become an adult it is very hard to learn it. I speak Mohawk to my grandchild but it is hard with that thing running there (indicated television). There is all kinds of stuff that's in English, so he is gonna get a lot of it. When we are alone I speak nothing but Mohawk to him. And what I have found is you start right from when they are little babies. He walks around now so we give him little chores to do and we praise him to the fullest. He is used to that now. He even looks around to see if we notice. I think that's what kids need today. My Grandfather is the one that gave me the idea that you notice the good and not the bad. Because if you notice the bad and not the good the children will grow up thinking that bad is the one that is good not the good. And so kids will be kids no matter what too. You can tell them and tell them and tell them but like I was telling you in the car I did not understand my grandmother and what she meant but I do today. And there are stories that tell us too in our teachings. I couldn't figure that out either, right away but because say we take this piece of paper and have someone explain this to you. Like right now you don't really know what it is but in time you will figure it out, but if they never give you that what is there to figure out. That's what happens the kids are lost right now; I think! They don't have nothing to grasp on to. Like if they see the deer come right up close to your house they say "oh a deer's coming up". But to the old people there was always a reason, but if we weren't told that though that there is a deer coming to your house you would not know why. And I think that's what we don't do anymore; we don't talk to our children anymore. We don't give them these little scenarios I guess and ah so that when they do something there's nothing to hold them back. Like with me with everybody I don't care who it is will experience stuff. Because there are other people are doing it too and your gonna do it, regardless and ah but like I said because your way out is taught. I never ever wanted to shame my grandfather or my grandma or my mother. But today because of the abuse and the way they talk to them they don't have that no more. I heard that from one woman on TV where she said "We don't have role models" That might be true. I think I had a role model and that was my grandfather. I did everything I could and never wanted to hurt him. Because I knew how much it would hurt him if I knew I was doing something I should not have been doing. In time that's what made me stop too.

But because today you go into the community; that's why I really don't go to the arena too much no more; We got to learn a lot of bad language even little wee people now. And ah in our language there is no such a word as what they are saying today. And ah I blame a lot of this on maybe residential schools; because sure they were made to work but right now there is not really something like that. I don't think they were really told the values or who we are; I don't know why but I was lucky I never got sent there. But I would think that is where it started from there because they never had those values anymore. And ah they were just made to work but there was nothing in the back of that. Like I'm gonna tell you a little story why I think like that it's because umm. My grandfather use to say there is a time and place for everything and ah he tried to show us that too. One day he left us with my cousins and they had to go to town we had to sell raspberries, strawberries; whatever was in season and that's how they made their money. And so uh when we were home we were going to surprise my grandmother and we always knew they made bread and washed the floors and so that's what my brother and I did. We got the flour ready and made this big mess and poured water in the dough and everything, which we didn't realize that there were other things that went with it to make it come up like that. So we put it in the oven and then we thought well we'll wash the floors and if you lived when I was a kid; I believe that if you went in everybody's house your floor would be like this (motion of a waving floor) because all the boards were uneven and it reminded me of this the way you got your rug here. you went back to when I was a kid, because that's the way we use to have our rugs

(she is referring to area rugs here). But ours was ripped so there would be wood here, rug there because it was worn and just made out of that black tar with something shiny over it. So my brother and I threw water over the floor because we thought that was the way to wash it but we weren't strong enough to wring out the mop like after a while so we couldn't get all of the water back up from the grooves that was in the floor. And so uh when my grandmother and my grandfather come home and I know today if a parent sees that in their house they'd have a screaming fit. I know that! But this is the way my grandfather handled it: He stood at the door and took a breath, we could see it but we couldn't hear it. He just stood at the door and he said oh, he says "I better hurry up and get the mop stick. He says, "You wanted to wash the floors did you?" " Boy that's a good idea." He goes and gets the mop and picks up the excess water on the floor. He knew that the bread we had made had been put in the oven. He pulled it out and it was hard as a rock because it was just water and flour. So he puts it on a stool and he says uh lets all just sit down and so my grandmother and my grandfather sat at the table and said I guess it's time now. You are showing that you want to learn how to wash the floor and showing us that you want to learn how to make bread and he says this is the way we do it. And they started explaining it to us. He didn't have a fit on us. He didn't tell us oh look at how stupid you are what did you go out and do a thing like that for you little brats. That's what you hear today parents don't have the patience or whatever you want to call it to take a step back to look at what is the positive here? The positive was that we wanted to learn how to wash the floor and learn how to make bread because it was time now. You are big enough and we wanted to be helpful to my grandmother. These were positive things my grandfather could find in what we had done. Today, parents don't take that step back anymore and try to see what is the positive here. They start screaming and cursing them and I have seen it with my own ears and my own eyes. Even to get in a car some parents jerk their child like that (shows a jerking pulling motion) and swear at them and get in the car. It's like I guess we need to go back.

One of those things is those little gadgets we got now and we all got it in our hands and we are always sitting there like this (motion of texting) we don't visit anybody anymore we sit there. We don't talk anymore cause were on here (motion of texting again) Talking about Dora or Diane and on here it says LOL (laughing out loud) all those little signals they got going. You know when that happened over 200 years ago that was happening back then and somewhere along the line they erased that for a while and now we are back here again, but this time we are using these little containers (shows texting again). And we're talking about people. We can't live without it and we are passing and forwarding all of these things to the point we are making people mad, committing suicides, because it becomes a habit I guess! And so we don't communicate anymore either. Maybe it's not even true what they are saying on there but because some people have this sensitivity they take it to heart, but we don't realize that. And uh, I know at my house they try to do that because I have a lot of children; I have a whole lot (giggles). They try to do that to me at my house and when they come in my house if I see them do that I go and I take it away from them. I'll say, "Did you come to see and visit me? All right I am going to put this over here. When we get through visiting then you can take it home, but here you don't use it!" And uh I don't know I just think that parents need to I guess open their eyes and start looking. So things have changed. That's what I think anyways is that we've got to look at positive things kids do today not the negative."

Denise then goes on a bit more about the changes that she sees in their community. The changes that people seem to be working against each other and not with each other. Working together and showing respect is so important. I think it is not just important in the Aboriginal culture but ours

as well. We could learn a lot about who we are as human beings by listening to what these women have to say.

Denise: Everybody will be an equal. That's what it says in our teachings. Dora and I were just writing about that today about bullying and that's what it says in there "We're all equal!". It doesn't go with the age it goes with how we look at ourselves; how we treat one another. Respect has to be there. Not only do you need to be equal for yourself but for those little people too. I don't know there a lot of things. I probably could talk all day, but I'll stop at that (chuckle). I don't know I see a lot of things but I make sure I go there because there's a lot of gossip. People live for gossip. And that's one of the things too that's wrong because that happened two hundred years ago. that is one of the sins the creator did not like. That's how the women go house to house saying oh well Diane said this about Danielle. Danielle would say ya, ya, ok and then say something about Diane. I would come back and say oh ya you know Danielle is saying this about you? Then I get these two going with fighting. Isn't that what's going on today with their text messages?

Diane replies to Denise: Facebook.

Denise: facebook, all of those things. I ask my nephew like I said what's happening? He's just a young man and he said it was us women. We need to start backing each other up. I don't know how we would do that cause that's the reason why men are out of control; kids are out of control. I don't know I am still rolling around in my mind (Finger beside head and moving it around). Takes me a while but I get it after a while. Me, umm, I got a few sons and umm and one of them is in his forties and they know when they make me mad cause I'll tell them and tell them. In a good way I explain things to them. I use sayings or teachings. But if they don't do it that's when I say well. I guess it's almost like when I had my children when they were babies they wouldn't go to sleep at night. Our old folks said "You wash them in cat nip" If you see a cat and he is restless he rolls in that cat nip just rolls and rolls until he's sound asleep. It relaxes him. It has the same affect because that child needs to have that relaxation. And when they get so big a lot of people say "oh yeah, use the red whip". While I was never told that! I was told it was medicine for them. I was told you bath them in these red whips. You take it right from here (pointing to top of head) and you take it all the way down here (moving hands down body), because something is bothering them that is why you bath them in it. This thing here will help it them ease their mind. A lot of the people I hear them. The old people say I used that red whip (gesturing whipping someone). I don't know I never heard of that. That is something that really is the last thing because you are suppose to talk and explain just like I said with my 18 month old. I'm doing that to him now and he knows when he gets on a chair to sit (says something in Mohawk) he looks at me and looks at me. So he picks out this one word "bum" He knows now and hangs onto that chair as soon as I say (Mohawk) cause he knows he'll get hurt and fall off that chair. As we are going a long he'll pick up another word and another word. He knows how to say (something in Mohawk). Then he will run and he'll close the door. She claps and praises her grandson with words from Mohawk language. You can just see him walk around just like "Yes I did a good deed". And this is when you start from right when they are little. Praise, that's what I learned! We don't give them enough of that I guess. We don't give them enough praise. We overlook that like when we only talk to them when they are only doing something that they shouldn't be doing. By that time we're angry though. Another thing my grandfather use to say is you never discipline a child if you're angry. You wait until you calm down and then you go to them. It is hard. It's a struggle. I have many children, grandchildren and a few great grandchildren now and umm it's hard! It's not easy. I don't think people realize how hard it really is (seems there are tears in her eyes)." I don't think anybody really talks about is the way were taught like umm the teachings there because I never knew that right away until

after I started with children. But umm, my kids I told everything that I am going to tell you guys. We are all born a certain time just like when were gonna die too at a certain time. They say that every one of us are here for so long when we reach that day regardless of what you are doing. When that day comes that's it. That's as far as you got to go. This is why you have got to try and live your life to the fullest. So when your born it says that right in there when we thank the moon; grandmother moon, it says that as we're moving (talking in Mohawk again). That's what were gonna go by is that moon; it is moving through and she's a grandmother to the women. And so uhh that was a form of a lot of things. You have control over when you want to have your children and you have to be mentally and physically ready because there's four cycles to that moon; 1) your getting ready cycle they probably have a name for it but I don't know. Then there are these two here (holding up four fingers and pulls on the next two) where there a your child bearing where you kind of like, well you know how many days you have your cycle. You know when you have these urges and stuff like that. That's how you can control yourself because you'll be prepared when this two moons come up. And eventually you'll go to the last one. This is when you're going to get old and if you look at all these there's medicines in everyone. Every one of them will help you along to determine when you have your children. So we are all special in the eyes of the creator. Because out there we can't see them but there all of these spirits out there. The little life forms are all out there. You really listen to these. One day you know there's Diane and you know her husband. I believe I was to go there. I believe that they will look after me. I want you to trust them to look after me so that I can be there; so it comes down. Cause really all of us are cells, but according to our teachings we're just spirits that comes down and when you get pregnant they say how lucky you are because you were chosen by this spirit that's where you want to be (the spirit). So when that happens your certain moon that will come and say this is when your time is. And if you really watch that calendar because every one of my children I knew what days and what month that baby was comin' because the moon. I knew exactly when I told him I was going to have my baby cause I had to be prepared. So there a lot of things maybe young folks aren't told today but I don't know. But that's the part I don't know how to get to that point. I know young kids are hungry for something. There are really starving as a matter of fact. They are hanging on by a thread I think and it's to the point that sometimes that string will break even they commit suicide or a car accident or overdose, whatever. Cause that thing broke that they were hanging onto so tight."

Michelle: "So I look at cause right now we're trying to do like a teen parent, teen Mom group, but the moms don't come out and I find a lot of them are they want their boyfriend. If their relationship comes apart. What was the role of fathers what were the roles of mothers? Cause I think that that's kind of lost now. We talked about this earlier: the males some of them don't even have a role. What was it like then? Where have we gone and where do we need to go?"

Diane: "Well it is vice versa now a days. The man now seems like they are more at home then the women. The women got the jobs. They're more like babysitting or whatever. They can't find a job or anything. It seems that way anyway. And what I use to hear a young person growing up If a man done something in the house even just wash dishes or something and the old folks would say that's shameful for a man there are jobs outside of the house. You know he's got no business doing that. Even if he only wanted to help to them it was shameful for a man to be in the house working, but today I guess it's all together different. Today most of the fathers now, fathers to be they have to go in the delivery room to watch their babies being born. That wasn't like that then either."

Denise: "There are men too that are kind of uh one of my boys is a single parent and he's been a single parent for a few years. And uh, but because of the hurt that was caused there. He more or less babied his

girls. They are girls. So when they were talking and I asked him what does the oldest one do? He says nothing? What does the next one do? He said nothing. The smallest one really did not do anything and it was wearing him out; because he had to work, he had to cook the meals, do the laundry, clean the house. He had to everything and so I said to him you need to give them responsibilities. They are never going to know anything if you don't do that. You're not caring for them the way you should be. You're not telling them how to do their laundry. They're old enough they could wash the dishes. I said have a plan the way we did it here. See like with me I would have had total chaos but because I had so many kids I had to have a routine. Every night was you wash the dishes Tina, I washed the dishes last night. When is it going to be her turn to wash the dishes. Like holy. (holding her hands over her ears) I did not want to hear it so finally I said to them (in Mohawk) sit by the table all of you and I already had a list made. What are all of the chores; there was making beds, clean the floor, clean the bathroom; everything. All different jobs. I was doing everything almost, laundry, cooking, cleaning, everything. And so I wrote them all out. So the first question I asked them when they sat down. What's one job everybody hates? It was unanimous: washing dishes! That was the number one most hateful job in the house. Washing dishes. Ok, would you like it if maybe you washed dishes once a month? Everybody says yes. I said ok let's talk about it. I had a big list that I put up on the wall there and I said there's all of these jobs and I want you to sign up for it. Wherever your name is your gonna rotate next time and its going to come down and eventually you are going to wash dishes. I will be the cook. I'll cook all of the meals but I need somebody to set the table. Clean the table; wash the dishes and all that stuff. I will do all of the laundry but I need two people to help me do the laundry. And on Sundays it will be your choice what you want to eat. I'll help you cook the meal. That way you'll learn how to cook. One day you will be by yourself and your gonna learn how to make a roast so you pick and choose. If you already picked a roast beef then you've got to pick something else the next time it becomes your turn. That's how I taught them how to cook, I taught them how to do laundry, and I was with them. Today my boys can cook anything you want. Clean your house. And I said this isn't women's work either. This is a job for everybody. Everybody because one day you will be left by yourself. You will always have a woman to clean your house. You will always have a woman that will wash your dishes but your gonna lean it too. The only thing I wanted my girls to cut the grass, to learn how to fix the lawnmower but my boys won't let them. That's where they drew the line. They said " Mom, don't let them do that. I said why they should learn. They looked at me and said what will all of the neighbours think? You have seven sons here and you mean our five sisters have to cut the grass. So today they don't know how to cut the grass, they don't know how to fix the lawnmower but they can change a tire that is about it. See to me I think that was wrong. They should have learned that. Cause I have a couple of girls that live by themselves and they should have known how to do that and I think to me you have a better relationship with other people because you are independent. I always told my kids you go to school, get your education, be what you want to be. Get yourself an apartment or something and when you turn that key in that door you know you paid for it. You open that fridge the food that is in there you paid for it. Your laundry is folded and everything. You did it. Then I says if you get a partner then you are always independent. Because you know what you are gonna do if that person maybe passed away. You won't sit there and wonder what to do with yourself. You always got to be independent. That's the way I taught my boys and think that is why their (her granddaughters father; her son) father it is the only mistake he made is he never taught them to do all that stuff because he was hurting because of what happened to him, but now he's got them doing the

laundry the dishes and cleaning the house and he says now life is a lot easier. But it took him a couple of years to realize what he was doing. And so I don't know where they get the time to do a lot of things because when you got children you have no time to be dilly-dallying around. I know I didn't."

The women continued to talk about parenting and shifted into talking about postpartum blues and what they saw as a new thing with moms and described as "needing space". The women spoke about how they never got the blues and did not see how anyone would have time for them when they were busy raising a family and they did not seem to relate to a mother needing her space. The women also spoke about how using traditional medicines kept them from getting postpartum blues and brought them back into balance. They also spoke about how they used medicines for giving birth as well as recovering from birthing.

Michelle: "It's all here right? It's all in mother earth? Even myself, I find this is where a lot of people are in certain because I don't know. I was never raised in a long house, but I can respect what people say. And I think for the most part I understand a lot the intricacies. How everything is connected right, but I know a lot of the girls that I see they don't understand. I don't think they have even been made aware of that connection we have with the world so where does that start? I think it starts in the home, but if they did not have their parents teaching them they didn't know."

Denise: "That is when you got to bring in that Residential school back then. It did not only rob us of our language; they robbed us of a lot, lot more! And it is spread all of this reserve because that's what I see. They were not taught those things thee. There was a lot of our people there. They didn't realize the abuse that they caused them and we got the after effects of it now. How can you tell them that when they never knew that themselves? I was lucky that I was raised by my grandparents. Even my own mother never really taught us that much because she was strapped when she went to school for speaking Mohawk and so she never really forced the issue. Where my grandparents would not allow us to speak English. We had to use our language. They weren't afraid to but my mother was. And there's a lot of families like that here. And this is why it's like this I think. I don't think you can really put your finger on one thing, it's a lot of things and it starts from there. Those residential schools."

Dawn: "So how do you bring them back? Like the girls we met with their having trouble just connecting with their children. And some of their parents went to residential schools so they came back and had different ways that they showed them that aren't working, but now these girls have these babies and their more interested in what dads doing or finding another man, but how do you get them to connect to the little ones?"

Diane: "Pretty hard bunch. There are certain ways that you do things like my sister said I used medicine before I had my baby. I had them a month before. And I had them like that. Maybe I would be sick for a couple of hours or three would be the mot and umm but there's a certain way of doing that. My husband

and my mother would go out early maybe about 5:30-6 in the morning and they'd go get that medicine and what I have to use and there was certain ways you have to pick em, you had to take Indian tobacco with you and all that, have to have my Indian name and those were the things you had to do for me to have my baby in just a couple of hours. There were certain kinds of medicines that they had to pick for you to do that and I don't know why and I don't know if anyone knows that has to be done and I don't think anybody uses that anymore. My daughter she used all that when she had her babies just like that too, she didn't suffer. But she used it a month before she had her baby. I don't know, she. I don't know how to go about teaching anybody these things so they could live by that. And you have to speak to the creator about it, ask for his help. So that way everything ya know will be the same. The mother and the baby but you've got to know what to say. You know, so, I don't know. I don't know how to go about it. And you've got to use your language for that. Got to use your language and that's one thing were really losing fast is language. We're trying our best to speak it and more so importantly than our longhouses. You've got to have your language to do your ceremony so that you work for the creator; its him that gave us all of that to live by and do by. So you've got to have all of that in order for him to know what you're doing. And our knowledge we're suppose to pass it on to the next generation, but it's hard now a days because they don't understand the language. So we pass on what we can we're trying to teach them in the longhouse what all has to be done. I try hard anyway but I just umm what I do with them is I just tell them ahead of time what they have to say in order for him and that person to understand what's going on. So, it's hard. It's really hard. It's heartbreaking to go in your longhouse and look and what it used to be like. It's really heartbreaking. Speakers is what we don't have much of anymore. Not like it use not be you could go to any man in the longhouse for the song, they speak and do it. And the women, the faith keeper women they all knew what had to be done all the ceremony, but even that's hard. It's sad; to me it's sad to see it the way it is now compared to what it used to be like. But slowly there are some speakers younger speakers and umm I just hope it can keep going. You need to tell what's going on so your creator knows what's going on. Like I say that's who we work for. That's who passed this on to us so that we have too, so that we work for him. We don't work for the people we work for him."

Dora, one of the other ladies present, decides to tell about her family's past and how she sees things happening with families in the community today.

Dora: "I guess my situation is different. I have been listening to Diane talking, a lot of things are similar but there not but umm, I'm a mother, I'm an aunt, I'm a sister. I helped my father raise us. My brothers and sisters have great respect. You know to this day they go away. I have one brother who is always all over the place he'll phone me and let me know where he's going and I'll be back on this certain day. So that's the kind of thing that they do for me and I appreciate that. I know already that my one brother is going to Ottawa next week. He's gonna be gone Tuesday/ Wednesday. He said I'll be back on Thursday. And my sister same thing she'll call me. This is what I'm gonna be doing; I'm going to Toronto for the weekend. So it's just a common courtesy that we give to each other and from that time on we had that big fight; I never had to worry about them again. They always give me that respect of letting me know where we are and who their with and what they're doing. I said I don't want to know all the gory details that you're doing you

know. I just want to know that you're okay. Because it's a lot of worrying. I says I don't really have to do this I says but I love you and I will do it. And I talked to my grandfather and I cried. I got to his house and he didn't know why I was so miserable and everything and then he sat me down and he said you know it's not your fault what happened with your mother. He said I've talked to her and she won't answer me. And so I'm telling you one day in the near future or several years down the road you're going to reap all the rewards. Your gonna know what you've made for yourself. And he says so don't feel bad. He says your looking after your Dad your making a road for yourself. And our Dad never went to the nursing home. We looked after him the best we could. Then umm he had some male friends that were really good to him and umm when we wanted to go some place they'd come over and they'd stay with him. And umm so that's what I had to do and umm my brothers and sister to this day; they treat me with that respect. And my grandfather's right I did get paid back. I didn't get money, but I do have a comfortable house. I'm very well and I still have the respect that I earned from my sister and brothers. Now I'm working hard with my nieces and grand nephews. I want them to learn the language. And I got my one brother. He works in the language now and he can speak and so that makes me happy. And my Dad like some people say well that's not a man's job to do this and that inside the house. This is what he told us. One day your gonna have a family; maybe your wife is gonna get sick; maybe your husband can't work. Your gonna have to wear both shoes to look after the house, look after the work and everything. So he says you got to know everything. I got my brothers thinking that they are better housekeepers than I am really; they're clean and that I appreciate too. With me after my Dad died there was a time when I had to go out and cut wood to make our house warm I went out and I chopped the wood for my daughter and took it in and she was just little then. About 8 or 9 she took the wood in. I had to make fire. I had to go to the well to get the water out and take it in the house. So I had to learn all of those things too. Change my own tire when I got a flat cause they weren't always home to do that for me. So sometimes the roles can be reversed to what the man has to do and what the woman has to do. I can remember one Christmas my mother was sick in bed. Couldn't get up. We were wondering; like my two brothers and I between us whether we were going to have Christmas. One of them spoke and asked my Dad; they said "What gonna happen with Christmas? Tomorrow it's Christmas. And my Dad said I don't know you're gonna have to wait and see. He says don't worry about it just go to bed like you usually do and behave yourself and you can see what's gonna happen tomorrow. Ok, so we went to bed went to sleep. He woke up the next day and we went downstairs there was a Christmas tree just a branch on the wall all decorated with a little bit of presents underneath. An on the table there was a couple of pies and low and behold there was a chicken sitting there on the table and he was ready to go out. After we went to bed my Dad got busy and he did all of those things he put the tree all together and wrapped all of those presents. My mother helped him but she was in bed. She told him how to make the pies. He made the pies and then he cooked the next day. So we had Christmas. So that's what I mean by we got to learn both roles so that when it comes to dire straits we can do things for ourselves and do it well and do it for our families.

I agree the things that's missing with our children these days is the fact that we're not communicating. Some families there so busy trying to be a family. The kids get home from school, the mother gets home, and the dad gets home and their just rushing. Hurry up you got lacrosse practice. Hurry up you got to go play ball. And a way they go thy jump in the car and where does the communication came in? They went to

the ball game. They went to the lacrosse game. Ok but now they come home; the family as a unit. Go to bed you got to go to school in the morning. They got sent to bed the kids. They (the children) don't have a chance to tell them "hey I fell off something at school and got hurt. I had to go to the office" They didn't have a chance to tell them that because they are so busy. So you have got to make time for your family as a unit, to talk, everybody: uncles, grandfathers and your aunts. All of those things. You've got to communicate. Your teacher. I always tell my students your teacher is the first person you can talk too. Get to trust her. She can help you a lot. When you go to school and your home. Look you think about it your in that class room form a little bit after 8 and then your there until about 3:00. So you spend more of your better time when your awake in the classroom. So who are you with? Your teacher. Where are you? In your classroom. I would say okay this is our classroom we're gonna keep it as neat as we can because this is where we spend the better part of our time. And if somebody has a problem, I'm here and I'll listen. That's what we got to do. We got to listen to what kids. We got to tell them how come we are saying it's not right and its wrong. How come your not suppose to do this? Right now the things that concerns me is all of the suicides amongst the young kids and umm I don't know what to say and how to fix it. But that's one place where we can start is talking to our children. And umm know where your kid is too. You know that thing that use to be on at 11 o'clock and they said "Do you know where your kids are?" No and sometimes I would say no I don't know where this one is, you know? (chuckling). I would say that and it got to be a joke in our family when they were younger. (Lifts arm in the air laughing) they'd say "I'm here". So that's what we got to do. We got to love our children. We've got to praise them and we should never give up on them either, you know. Cause there is a lot of good in these kids. All they got to know is that what they're doing is right and they're trying and then umm us we got to let them know that they're doing okay and that your happy with what they are doing. My dad use to say "I don't care what you what to do in your life. You can do it; you can be who you want to be, what you want to be. If you chose to be a ditch digger, that's fine. But you be the best ditch digger there is. You got to go do it for yourself. You gotta, at some point you got to look after yourself because I'm not always gonna be around. Then he would tell us. I want you to know who you are, where you belong and what you believe in. And that's all I'm asking. He'd say I don't expect you to be the richest and the smartest but I want you to be happy! When you feel like everything is down on you, falling and things aren't going right; remember its gonna fix itself. You go around that corner, around the bend and all of the sudden things are okay. He said then you'll wonder how come you worried about all these things that weren't going right for you at that time. My grandmother, my aunts when I was a little girl. Sometimes they'd get to the house, they'd come and get me and I'd go there she'd be working, doing things; painting, fixing her lawn, working her flowerbed. I enjoyed that part. That where I'd help her but we weren't just in a field doing things, shed be talking. At the time I didn't realize all of the things that she was telling me, but now I do. She didn't always, she'd say you know when you do things for people you shouldn't ask for anything in return or to get paid you do it from your heart when you help. She said that's the best part! I remember that real well cause umm I was painting chairs in the back and the man she was living with at the time came home from work and says "oh you're here!" I said yeah. My grandmother looked at him and said see all of those chairs (about four chairs sitting there) she painted them. He said oh my goodness and he gave me some money and I told him, (Gawtohe) "no I don't want money. Grandma told me to do it right from my heart". So that's what I did. So those were some of the lessons that I remember I was taught, told.

And umm to this day that's the way I feel. Somebody ask me to do something can I do this, can I do this? I'll say sure and I don't expect anything in return."

Listening to these women during that evening gave me the opportunity to not only look deeper into the challenges that exist within their community, but the knowledge, strength and care that these women have not only for their families but for their people. I could have broken down all that they said but it would not have honoured who these women are or what they said. I could not have replaced all of this in my own words. I wanted you to be able to read what they contributed and let you get a sense of who they were. These Elders had many things to say in regards to each of these themes; but they told us stories from their own lives. These women and the stories they shared opened my eyes to the great wisdom that they hold and it reaffirmed all that I had read about learning from them. Archibald (2008) had this to say about Elders in her book on *Storywork*: "Respect must be an integral part of relationship between the Elder and the researcher-respect for each other as human beings, respect for the power of cultural knowledge, and respect for cultural protocols that show ones honour for the authority and expertise of Elder teacher" (Archibald, 2008, p. 41). I took a lot away from this group and I am still learning from this experience. In my journal entry for this group I said that I want to learn more about what the Elders have to offer. I was so intrigued by these ladies and their wisdom. It made me realize how important these Elders are to the future of their communities as well as ours. I think we have got to make time for each other whether we are family or not, no matter the colour of our skin, religion or the places we come from. We need to make time to start building relationships and respecting all of the wonderful people and things living on this earth.

Chapter Five: Making Meaning of the research that was done

It is time to start making meaning of the research journey that I have taken. How will I do this? There was such a huge amount of data. How do I make sense of it all? It has been a difficult process trying to figure out how to analyze it all so I decided to break down the analysis into three sections: 1) Analyze my journey as a researcher using Aboriginal Scholars as a reference point to my learning; 2) analyze all of the focus groups and break into common themes that emerged within the groups and in the literature; and 3) analyze the Elders group and discuss the emergent themes and how they relate to the literature.

My Journey

How do I analyze a journey like this? As a person I had to deconstruct who I am. I started looking at who I was from the very first focus group. Looking back at my journal entry from that very first group I felt sad about the experiences that these young women had as well as the limited support they had from the community and for some their families. It made me realize how fortunate I was to have an education, a job and family support when I was a young single Mom. I was not sure what I would have done without the support system that I had. From that first focus group I knew I would be looking at who I am and who I was throughout this experience. Looking at my positionality was important throughout this process because locating who I am and where I come from is an important part of being a researcher. I had to really look at my place in the world and how I view it in order to make sense of the research that I was doing.

Kovach (2010) discusses how doing Indigenous research as a Non-Aboriginal academic requires one to explore one's own belief system. As mentioned in Chapter Three I did a lot of

reflecting, deconstructing, crying, questioning and learning. Kovach (2008) states that reflexivity was an intensive journey for her as well: "As a reflexivity method of research, situating the self authorizes expression of the relevant narrative from personal experiences, those reminiscences of life rooted in our earliest experience that shape our understanding of the world" (Kovach, 2008, p. 112). In postmodern research, reflexivity is a central component of the research process. It requires an awareness of the self in creating knowledge. "In anti-oppressive approaches, self-reflection is described as 'critical reflexivity', which purposefully gives space for the political examination of location and privilege" (Kovach, 2010, p. 33). Trying to do this with two eyes, two ways of viewing the world, was difficult for me. I had no idea of the feelings and thoughts that I would be playing tug of war with. I had to reverse my way of thinking and writing. The belief system in the hegemonic form academia is so different from the research and the people of the community with whom I was working. The research literature mentions how interconnecting Indigenous and Western knowledges can be complementary in academic knowledge (Dei, 2000, Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher et al., 2009), but it is so difficult to do. I wanted to write from my heart and not my head and I was afraid of how this type of writing would be accepted by the academy. How would I analyze my journal entries, stories and the voices of the community without stepping on anyone else's toes?

I did not do it alone; I had guidance from faculty advisor (Dawn), the women from the community that participated in the focus group sessions, as well as the work of Aboriginal scholars to guide me. The literature and advice guided my writing and allowed me to open up my mind and combine it with my heart (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008). I started viewing the research not just academically but as a person who shares this world with all of creation. I was

able to look at what I had learned about doing research using an Indigenous paradigm and viewing it from a belief that knowledge is shared with all creation (Wilson, 2008).

I was able to see that knowledge is shared and learned to help us understand the world around us. Change was happening in me because I was able to open my mind and heart and listen to what the community was saying. I was a cultural learner and feel that I was learning to appreciate the knowledge that the women in this community have and shared with us.

I enjoy the reality of this research. It is the real experiences that come from the community that seem to give me a better understanding of what parenting is like on the Reserve. It allows me to learn firsthand how much more of a struggle it is to parent when faced with the history and challenges of the people on this Reserve. There needs to be support with parenting and how to parent traditionally. The one thing that I have noticed so far with these first three groups is the love that they have for their children and the concern that they have for the other children in the community. (Chapter 3)

When I look back on this journal entry and think about all six of the focus groups I can see and have heard how important it is to have the love and support of family and community. The literature has shown that families participating in community parenting programs can increase opportunities for social support (Walker & Shepard, 2008; Ball, 2009). Aboriginal families are pivotal to the well being of Indigenous communities. In some of the literature about the well - being of Aboriginal families have stated that “Stimulating and nourishing environments allow for children to learn and thrive” (Walker & Shepard, 2008, p.1). It seemed as though the women in these focus groups knew that support is needed whether they need it themselves or know of other family or community members who are looking for it. A positive family environment allows children to feel a sense of connectedness to kinship and culture. Spirituality and cultural belonging will strengthen families and communities (Walker & Shepard, 2008). I had heard these things in the research literature but I actually heard this from the community members

themselves. They are looking for a way to support one another and trying to incorporate their spiritual and cultural belonging. Even the young moms talked about "I want to stay on rez because the language and everything is here. The Longhouse is here and people you know your whole life is here." And indicated that, "This is home!" I could tell how important belonging meant to the community. There was so much information to take in and when it came to talking about my experiences as a researcher I also realized that another important component to my learning came from meeting with my advisor.

While I was constantly struggling with the writing process my advisor Dr. Dawn Zinga always reassured me and told me how difficult it is to wrap your head round another way of thinking that is different than what I was used to. I appreciated the opportunities to observe Dawn working with participants and learned from her how she related to the moms by drawing upon her own parenting experiencing. When she discussed her experiences as a parent it acted as a bridge and seemed to encourage the participants to open up to her. I had read Kovach and she speaks about how "Researchers are encouraged to locate themselves, to share personal aspects of their own experience with research participants" (Kovach, 2010 p. 110) and within the focus groups, I was able to observe this in action. Kovach (2009, 2010), Wilson (2008) and Archibald (2008) have stated the importance of the researcher being trustful, respectful and reciprocal with the participants involved in the research. "Respect must be an integral part of relationship between the Elder and the researcher-respect for each other as human beings, respect for the power of cultural knowledge, and respect for cultural protocols that show one's honour for the authority and expertise of Elder teacher" (Archibald, 2008 p. 41). Throughout the research project, I was able to observe how respect, reciprocity, rapport and trust was built collaboratively with the members of the Six Nations community.

Learning how to be a partner in research with the community was a part of this journey for me. I feel like I have learned a lot from the members of the research team in terms of how they have collaboratively worked together to serve the Six Nations community in a respectful way (Kovach, 2009, 2010). The larger research project that I was involved with had already been within the community for six years and I was clearly able to observe how those ongoing relationships had established patterns of trust and rapport (Wilson, 2008). This is known as relational accountability, which requires the researcher, whether he or she is Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, to form reciprocal and respectful relationships with the community (Wilson, 2008, Kovach, 2009). Kovach (2009) discusses how non-Indigenous scholars can come to understand Indigenous Knowledges by forming relationships with Aboriginal communities. During the focus groups, I observed that Dawn was nonintrusive in her facilitation and tended to be what Wilson (2008) refers to as “quietly aware” watching and listening to each member of the community while they participated in focus groups. Wilson (2008) stated that a researcher needs to listen deeply and hear with more than their ears, a skill that I was able to observe during the focus groups. Dawn's style of being a researcher seemed to fit in line with what Wilson (2008), Archibald (2008) and Kovach (2005, 2009) talked about as being important within research process as she was reflexive and always non-judgemental of what is being seen and heard. I was able to observe what Kovacs stressed as being important within the research relationship, namely the ability to be oneself, be humble, be honest, and show respect to the community (Kovach, 2009). My reading of Indigenous scholars and my opportunities to observe the larger research project was an awakening for me and contributed to my determination to chose the methodology that I did and to learn more about doing research using an Indigenous paradigm.

As stated in my methodology, an Indigenous research paradigm comes from a fundamental belief that knowledge is relational (Wilson, 2001, 2008). It is shared with all creation. It is not just individual knowledge, it is a knowledge that is relational (Wilson, 2001, 2008). It was important for me to recognize this while I was present at the focus groups, as I transcribed and as I analyzed the data. I needed to realize how important the relationships were between Dawn and the community, the participants and their place in the community and also how the participants related not only to one another but the land and animals that surround them; that they are a part of. When doing Indigenous research you are responsible as the researcher to recognize the importance of the relationship that the community has with all creation (Wilson, 2008). As a researcher "you are answerable to all of your relations when doing research" (Wilson, 2008, p. 56). I remembered what Wilson (2008) had said while observing the focus groups. I tried to take note of not only what I was seeing but what I was hearing. I was hearing about the relationships that the people in the community had with each other, but also the other. I also heard about the importance of the Creator and what they have been given by him. The listening that I did made me feel like a cultural learner. It made me realize just how important the past, present and future is to the people of this community. There is an interconnectedness with all relationships within families, community and nature. Knowledge is not only shared among people but with the plants, animals and the earth (Wilson, 2008). "Creating and sharing knowledge that authentically represents who you are and how you understand the world is integral to the survival of a people's identity" (Castellano, 2004, p. 109). It is important to understand what Indigenous Knowledge is when supporting Aboriginal families and communities.

I really began to become aware of this interconnectedness between all living things through the stories that community shared about all of these things. It was part of my cultural learning hearing this from the community members themselves. Looking back on my journal entries I was able to see just how much I have learned and grown with this research experience. Research changes you? I think it does. I look at the community of Six Nations quite differently than before I started this journey. The community was a big part of this change for me and that is why I could not have done this project without their voices, their spirits and their knowledge.

Voices of the Community

I managed to get through analyzing my journal entries and now it is time to analyze the voices of the community. Where do I begin? How do I do this and honour what the community has said? There is a uniqueness to these voices because there is an opportunity to see what the participants had to say about their children, parenting, family, success, community, language, culture and respect. Some of the themes identified in the focus groups were a part of the bigger project and this gave me the opportunity to tie them into the themes from the literature review. It is as if the research has been circular. The literature that I chose to look at in the beginning of this project seems to be flowing and interconnecting with the voices of the community.

The voices of the community members gave me the opportunity to see the realities that exist within the community and how the issues that exist interconnect with all of the women from the six focus groups. In Chapter Four I shared the voices of the community by breaking them into themes. I would now like to look at these themes and the literature that supports what I found in the voices of the community members. The women in these groups were asked questions via the bigger project and they all expanded on the topics discussed about parenting, traditional parenting, fathers, success and community involvement and support. As previously

mentioned, the principle investigator of the larger research project asked the same specific questions of each of the focus groups. There were themes within the focus groups' responses related to those specific questions as well as themes that emerged out of the discussion within the focus groups. In this section, both types of themes are considered in terms of their relationship to the literature.

Parenting, Traditional Parenting and Importance of Family

The women from the community described what they see as parenting at Six Nations. They mentioned that many parents lack motivation and involvement with their children. The younger and older moms seem to all agree that there is a great lack of respect towards parents and Elders. They see a lack of discipline within the community. Respect for one another and discipline were an important part of how traditional parenting was taught. They would like to parent and discipline traditionally and it is hard to do because they are always being looked at and judged by others (mainstream culture, CAS, schools etc). "Initially we disciplined the way that we were taught. Parenting is more mainstream nowadays because of the involvement with CAS." Many still do not use the old ways of discipline but the ones that choose do find it is difficult. "They don't want you to hit your kids anymore; no lickin's anymore. Not a beating a spanking." Another said " Spankings are good. My kids turned out fine." A few of the others agreed that, "You need to discipline out of love, not anger because anger can control your emotions. You have to stay calm."

Historically having children was seen as being sacred and an honour (Hand, 2006). It was considered an ethical breach to criticize, correct or even control children (Hand, 2006; Ross, 1992,). Physical discipline was very rarely used as a means to discipline children traditionally (Hand, 2006). Throughout the focus groups, there were varying opinions on what traditional

parenting practices were and how they were to be implemented appropriately. Some of the women in the elders group suggested that physical discipline had been confused with the use of traditional practices. For example, the use of the red whip was in tonics and bathwater as a calming agent and only rarely used physically. In those incidents when it was used physically, there was a ceremony involved that fostered reflection and learning for the parent and the child as well as prayers and the giving of thanks. Many of the women discussed the difficulty of using traditional parenting practices with red whip and water. One young mom said "Some families are like even right on with traditional discipline. Many use the water in their face and everything." It seems as though many of these moms were trying to implement traditional parenting with their children but it is difficult for them. Because so many children were removed from their families throughout generations many parenting skills, cultural teachings and belonging to community were disrupted (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Quinn, 2007). The women in the elders group spoke about how traditional practices had been lost and continue to fall away as those with the language and understanding of the traditions pass away.

Throughout generations a lot of information regarding the traditional parenting practices within Aboriginal communities was lost due to the imposition of colonization and the impact of residential schooling (Proposed Research Grant, Zinga, 2009). It is important to reclaim traditional parenting practices because getting to know about and becoming a part of their culture has an impact on them as parents (Ball, 2009; Ball, 2010; Monahan & Ball, 2007). Traditional parenting practices do not only allow for reinforcement of cultural identities, but can also nourish family and community relationships (Monahan & Ball, 2007). Aboriginal families are pivotal to the well being of their communities. "Stimulating and nourishing environments allow for

children to learn and thrive” (Walker & Shepard, 2008, p.1). These environments allow children and youth to learn more about who they are as Aboriginals.

Many of the women in the focus groups talked about how traditional parenting practices were important to them, especially the support and love of family. A couple of younger moms said "We have our families. They might not always be blood but we have our own families." and "You always watch out for one another." This shows that support is important to them whether it is family or friends. They like knowing there is someone who is there for them. They also spoke about the importance of family gathering together and shared examples from their own families. As one mom said, "It was and still is important to be involved with family; sisters, brothers, parents, grandparents aunts and uncles." The moms and aunts also stressed the importance of respect, as one young mom said, "Like my family was brought up like to respect people. We respect people. We don't talk back to our Elders no matter what. Like you hold your tongue." Respect for one another and discipline were an important part of how traditional parenting was taught. Support and respect seem to be important to the community. Getting in touch with their traditional parenting practices may be something that can benefit parenting in the community. Opening communication between Elders and young parents may help bring mothers in the community together to reclaim some of the traditional parenting practices that seem to have been lost over time. I think it is important to try and reclaim some of the traditional parenting practices as it may open some doors to younger mothers getting to know their culture. It is important to reclaim traditional parenting practices because getting to know about and becoming a part of their culture has an impact on Aboriginals as parents (Monahan & Ball, 2007; Ball, 2009, Ball, 2010).

Giving support to parents and other caregivers can help promote positive family environments (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Walker & Shepard, 2008). A positive family (both immediate and extended) environment allows children to feel a sense of connectedness to kinship and culture. Spirituality and cultural belonging will strengthen families (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Walker & Shepard, 2008). Families are important in the development of one's identity. Introducing knowledge and language is an important part of spirituality and belonging within Aboriginal communities and families. Indigenous languages and knowledges connect communities and allows for reproduction of past, present and future knowledge (Kirmayer et al., 2003). It allows for a strong sense of self, family, and community. Some of the women even talked about the importance of this. Using traditional language seemed to be something that a few of these moms remembered doing and still do when the family gathers. As one mom shared, "As a kid I would listen to Elders talk Mohawk." One of the moms said that her family talks in Cayuga when they eat as a family. Residential schooling had a significant impact on Aboriginal families and communities and interrupted traditional parenting practices. Some of the participants indicated that they did not have access to many of their immediate or extended families. Others drew on the upon their mother, grandmothers and aunties to guide their parenting. During the focus group with the Elder women they indicated that the available knowledge of parenting was somewhat limited and some had been lost over time. The Elders mentioned that sometimes outside influences shifted peoples understanding of what was traditional and because of this there seems to be a variation across families. There was a disruption in the intergenerational transmission of parenting information and it has had other long-lasting effects that continue to effect Aboriginal families and communities to this day (Bull, 1991, Kirmayer et al., 2003, Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates, 2010).

Many Aboriginal peoples are struggling with their past and trying to balance how to express themselves in a modern world while still maintaining ways to honour their ancestors, elders and crucial cultural values (Kirmayer et al., 2003).

Fathers

When looking at support of family and friends it is important to look at relationships with fathers. The focus groups discussed the role of fathers in the community. There were some who had positive experiences with the fathers of their children and some who did not. It was a bit difficult because we were not fortunate to have a focus group with fathers. This limited the data in terms of a male/father's perspective on parenting. The data that was given by the women seemed to coincide with the research that has been done on Aboriginal fathers. The moms offered many perspectives on fathers such as: "I don't understand why the Dads don't care or have relationships with their kids?"; "We are given a harder time than them"; "A lot of fathers aren't involved."; "A lot of the fathers are drinking. It is the mothers that really do everything." Manahan & Ball (2007) stated that according to participants colonialism and assimilation practices interrupted the role that men played in their families and community. There are many Aboriginal people who did not attend Residential Schooling but suffer the effect from them such as family violence and substance abuse. This left many men without a positive male role model while growing up (Manahan & Ball, 2007). Not having a positive role model added to their difficulty in relating to their children as well as knowing how to parent. Research has also shown that social support and parenting education can increase the quality of involvement and parenting by Aboriginal fathers (Ball, 2010). Fathers feel that being with their children allows for them to break the cycle of trauma and give their children what they were missing growing up (Manahan & Ball, 2007).

There were a few women who talked about the role their sons play as fathers as well as a couple of young moms whose children have a father that is trying to be a positive role model in his children's lives. The one Dad was involved even when he was away for a while her children could call their Dad whenever they wanted to and "Now that he is back here close to home they love it. They always listen to him." A mom from another group said, "My mother chose to move away so she left and my Dad he took care of us." A couple of the ladies from the Elders group also talked about their sons roles as fathers saying that no matter what their sons know to take care of family. So there are Aboriginal fathers who have a positive influence on their children's lives. It would be interesting to have had some more focus groups that could have added to the data on fathers at Six Nations. Having a group with fathers themselves may have allowed us to see how they feel about parenting at Six Nations. Having the support for fathers is just as important as support for the mothers. This brings us to the next topic discussed with the focus groups about the importance of support from the community.

Community Involvement and support.

Many of the young moms seemed to feel that there needed to be more offered to them and their children in the community. As one young mom said, "There is nothing for us here, I would love to win money and open up a place for single moms." Research has shown that there are inadequate services for young Aboriginal mothers. Young Aboriginal mothers are often faced with inadequate housing, income and low paying jobs(Kenny et al., 2004). Social service workers have said that there young moms have difficulty raising their children because there is not much funding available to support them (Rutman et al., 2001). A couple of the moms mentioned a program that was available called "Healthy Babies" on the reserve, but felt that there was not as much offered as there is on the New Credit Reserve which is just south of Six

Nations. Some of the younger moms felt everything was to spread out on the reserve.

"Everything is too spread out here. It is too hard to get around." Research has found that having accessibility is important to consider for many young parents. Accessibility is an important consideration for many young parents (Price-Robertson, 2010; Soriano, Clark & Wise, 2008).

They are more likely to participate in programs that are accessible to them by public transport, or programs that that provide transportation (Price-Robertson, 2010; Soriano et al., 2008). Maybe with increased accessibility the young moms could have an opportunity to feel like they are connected to the community. Many of the young moms said that they wanted to feel like they were a part of the community and not criticized by them. It is important for them to feel like they are a part of the community. One of the young moms said "People from the community are watching and criticizing you all of the time." "When you are on welfare you try to find a way off or out and you can't because they kick you at your lowest here. There is no one to help us."

Rutman et al., (2001) and Price-Robertson (2010) report that young mothers feel that they are under surveillance by social service workers. Many young mothers report experiences of being judged or even feeling hostility towards them when dealing with social service institutions, education providers, and health care facilities (Rutman et al., 2001; Price-Robertson, 2010).

Young mothers are reaching out and looking for support but sometimes the support is not there in terms of government funding and programs for them (Rutman et al., 2001). Young mothers do not only need support from social services, education providers and health care providers but also from their families and community."Having role models, mentors or just someone to support Aboriginal peoples is important" (Smith et al., 2005, p. 50). Smith et al. (2005) state that many of their participants described the importance of having someone (a parent, an aunt or uncle or a

grandparent, community member) who believed in them and showed them that it was possible to achieve success and fulfill their goals and dreams.

Having support from within families and community seems to not only be important to the young moms at Six Nations but the research shows it has been helpful in other Aboriginal communities (Kenny et al, 2004; Smith et al., 2005; Soriano et al., 2008). Many of these young moms struggle financially because they are single and looking for support. Research has shown that many Aboriginal women often live in single, female headed households (Berthin, 2011; Kenny et al, 2004). Aboriginal women are less likely to be working and more likely to be living in poverty (Berthin, 2011; Kenny et al, 2004). A majority of the young moms from the focus groups told us that they have not had the opportunity to finish high school. Aboriginal women with lower levels of education tend to earn less money in the workforce. Having a lower education may impact and limit the types of jobs that these women are able to obtain (Kenny et al., 2004). It is important to hear what these young moms had to say about what may or may not be offered to them. Having the voices of these young women is imperative because hearing their voices may help to generate successful services and policies for these women but for the community (Kenny et al., 2004, Smith et al., 2005). Having successful services and policies can help lead to success within the community.

Generating successful services is important to the community. Smith et al. (2005) state that parents and community leaders in their study made efforts to rebuild the infrastructure in their community and have a positive social environment that would support Aboriginal parents in making better choices for themselves and their children. Walker & Shepard (2008) and Ball (2009) found that participation in community parenting programs can increase opportunities for

social support. Success is important to many in this community and each of the focus groups discussed what success was and what it meant to them. *Success as a Parent*

During the focus groups Dawn discussed that there are many different ways to look at success and she asked the participants if they would talk about how they think about success and how as parents they would define success. The participants all had something to contribute in terms of what success meant to them. As indicated in chapter four, the participants offered several ideas about success and how important it was for them to see their children happy, healthy and educated. Many of them related success to their children going to school, wanting to be there and to finishing grade twelve. Many of the women in the focus groups related success to education. Much of the literature discusses success in relation to education. Success for Aboriginal children and youth in school happens when families are involved in their child's schooling (Baydala et al., 2007; Bazylak, 2002; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher et al., 2009; Kenny, 2004; Kirkness, 1999; Smith et al., 2005; Toulouse, 2007; Zinga et al., 2010). Strong support systems and programs can assist Aboriginal youth to stay in school (Bazylak, 2002). Support can come from family, extended family, teachers, counsellors and other members of the community (Bazylak, 2002). Having a positive self-identity can also play a role in student success (Baydala et al., 2007; Bazylak, 2002; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher, et al., 2009; Kenny, 2004; Kirkness, 1999; Smith et al., 2005; Toulouse, 2007). Being a part of their culture and knowing who they are and the development of a strong self-identity is also beneficial when it comes to success (Baydala et al., 2007; Bazylak, 2002; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hatcher et al., 2009; Kenny, 2004; Kirkness, 1999; Smith et al., 2005; Toulouse, 2007). Success is important to this community and looking at what literature suggest in terms of educational success may be helpful and support what these women were saying.

Elders (Clan Mother, Knowledge and Language Keepers) Focus Group

This section was a bit different from the other focus groups. The women in this group each held a role in the community as clan mothers, knowledge keepers and or language keepers. Each of these women had so much to share. I was intrigued by these four women and the knowledge that they had. Their strength and wisdom came through their stories. Aboriginal people have a strong gift to tell of the significance of their history and cultures (Kenny et al., 2004; Stiegelbauer, 1996). Personal narratives are seen as their identities. Narratives present a reality to the outside world. Personal narratives can shape and construct the narrator's reality. (Shepard et al., 2006). "When people are gifted with storytelling, the stories become so much a part of their character and that's what really captures people's attention." (Archibald, 2008, p. 66). Elders often use experiences from their own or others' lives to help counsel or teach others (Wilson, 2008). The stories told that evening really captured my attention. Many of the challenges and realities of Six Nations came out in these stories. The themes from this focus group were similar to some of the other groups but were some important differences. Within the Elders focus groups, the identified themes were: Residential schooling; parenting and guidance; creation, respect and spirituality. These themes also can be supported by the research literature.

It is important to begin with a brief overview of the role of an Elder within Aboriginal culture so that their importance and influence in their communities is understood. Again, each of these women had a special role in the community and shared characteristics with Elders in other Aboriginal communities such as:

- custodians of knowledge
- able to relate their experiences to their culture carry out the role of Elders; storytelling, observance, and learning related to their experiences.

- recognize and share their lifelong experiences, learning and teachings
- identify Aboriginal worldviews
- identify the contributions of their ancestors and people in science, history, agriculture, astronomy etc. (Sutherland & Henning, 2009).

Residential Schools and Colonization

Denise brings up a point that is quite prevalent in the literature. Residential schooling added to the breakdown of their language, culture and traditions. Denise shared her views.

I blame a lot of this on maybe residential schools; because sure they were made to work but right now there is not really something like that. I don't think they were really told the values or who we are; I don't know why but I was lucky I never got sent there. But I would think that is where it started from. It started from there because they never had those values anymore.

Denise went on to talk about the impact of Residential schools:

It did not only rob us of our language; they robbed us of a lot, lot more! And it is spread all of this reserve because that's what I see. They were not taught those things there. There was a lot of our people there. They didn't realize the abuse that they caused them and we got the after effects of it now. How can you tell them that when they never knew that themselves!

The residential schools weakened Aboriginal communities. Residential schools were very oppressive; they were devised as a way to assimilate and isolate Aboriginal children from their families and culture (Blackstock et al, 2004; Bull, 1991; Burns, 2001; deLeeuw, 2009; Kirkness, 1999; Morrisette, 1994; Tobias, 1991; Kenny et al, 2004; Kirmayer et al., 2003; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Quinn, 2007; Shepard, 2006; Smith et al., 2005;). Denise has lived through watching the community experience the effects of Residential schools. She touched on the disconnection within the community due to the disruption of the intergenerational transmission of culture and practice by the residential school system (Blackstock et al, 2004; Burns, 2001; Kenny et al, 2004;

Kirkness, 1999; Kirmayer et al., 2003; Morrisette, 1994; Manahan & Ball, 2007; Quinn, 2007; Shepard, 2006; Smith et al., 2005). The breakdown in culture has been seen and felt by all of the ladies and their families. They realize that families and community need to be a collective again. Denise, Diane, Dora and Danielle each shared their feelings of loss that are associated with their young people. They have great concerns about the parenting and the youth in the community. Denise said that:

The kids are lost right now; I think! They don't have nothing to grasp on to. Respect has to be there. Not only do you need to be equal for yourself but for those little people too.

These women know their roles in the community and are working hard at trying to figure out how they can help their youth. It is hard for them to know where to start. Traditionally children were a part of their communities and extended families. Families and community made sure that children were properly cared for and educated in the skills they needed to develop (Hand, 2006).

Parenting and Guidance (Ethic of non interference)

Ross (1992) referred to a few important differences between Aboriginal culture and mainstream culture. Specifically, he discusses the following five concepts: the ethic of non-interference; the ethic that anger not be shown; the ethic of respecting praise and gratitude; the conservation -withdrawal tactic; and the notion that the time must be right (Ross, 1992). The principal of the Ethic of Non-Interference is that an Aboriginal person "will never interfere in any way with the rights, privileges and activities of another person" (Ross, 1992, p. 12). All of these ethics seemed to be touched upon in the stories told by these women. Traditionally parents were required to permit their children to make their own choices. When Denise was telling the story of when her and her brother tried to wash the floors and bake bread she told us how her grandfather handled the situation without getting upset or interfering with what they had done.

He had asked them what it is they tried to do. He realized by what they had done it was time for them to learn how to bake bread and mop floors. Denise's grandfather knew that the time was right and they were ready to learn because they attempted to do it on their own. Traditionally children contributed by engaging in different tasks like Denise and her brother washing floors and baking bread. Engaging in these tasks was necessary not only for learning, building skills and self-confidence but for survival of individuals, families, and the community as a whole (Hand, 2006). Denise's grandfather showed respect, praise and gratitude towards his grandchildren. Ross (1992) and Hand (2006) both discuss the importance of the ethic of anger not being shown and the importance of showing respect, praise and gratitude. Denise talked about how that seems to be missing in parents today. She says how her grandfather did not have a fit on them. He didn't tell them how stupid they were or that were being brats. He was patient and loving. Denise said that:

parents don't have the patience or whatever you want to call it to
take a step back to look at what is the positive here?

Denise seemed to relate this to a lack of connections in the community with youth and families. Looking at the positives is so important in the lives of children and youth. Looking to connect with their children and youth came up many times during their focus group. The relationships with the world around them is also important in terms of connecting to the community. Being aware of knowledge being relational and connecting to the lives of the community seems to be very important to these women.

Creation, Respect and Spirituality

As mentioned earlier in the literature and methodology section knowledge is seen as being relational and shared with all creation (Steinhauer, 2002, Kovach, 2005, 2008, Wilson, 2008). The women in this focus group talked about the connections with creation in ways that

made the idea of everything being relational more real for me. I was mesmerized by the way these women talked about the Creator and the world around them. In my journal entries I mentioned how I felt after this focus group, "I was so intrigued by these ladies and their wisdom. It made me realize how important these Elders are to the future of their communities as well as ours." Wilson (2008) talks about how research is sacred ceremony and that within an Indigenous research paradigm it is all about building relationships and bridging this sacred space where we meet together. It felt like we were in that sacred space that evening. There was something about the way the women spoke and how you just could not stop listening to their stories. I was a cultural learner throughout the whole evening. I felt like I was supposed to be there learning the importance of the land we were sitting on and how sacred the people and the land really are. Wilson (2008) says that "Knowledge itself is held in the relationships and connections formed with the environment that surrounds us." (p.87).

I did not realize how important all of these connections would be until I started this analysis. Denise spoke about the importance of grandmother moon and how women have control over when they wanted to have their children and they needed to be physically and mentally ready because there's four cycles to that moon. Denise went back to her beliefs and teachings to try and explain how women used to know when it was the right time to conceive. It was done by using the strength of grandmother moon. This relates to Wilson (2008) and Steinhauer (2002) when they discuss the relationships with all of creation and the cosmos. Reading it and trying to understand that concept is one thing but having a piece of that told to you is another. Denise talked about how young people do not know about the importance of a deer coming to your property.

A deer crossing your path may show you that you are a very compassionate, gentle and loving person. Deer teach us how powerful it is to have a gentle demeanor, as well as exerting keen observation and sensitivity. "Deer's are in tune with nature and all it comprises. They are sacred carriers of peace and show those with this power animal how to open their hearts and love unconditionally." (Alltotems.com, 2012; Woolcott, 2013).

Diane and Danielle also spoke about the use of medicines when having a child and medicine that is used after you have your child. Diane was not sure about baby blues and where they come from because they did not have them. "I don't know how you have time to get the blues when your raising a family? I really don't. Where does that come from?" Denise: I think it has to do with our medicines. See with my children I took medicines after two and I think that's why I never got like that because of the medicines. Danielle: "There is medicines so you won't have pains when you're having babies. It goes just like that. Ask her (pointing to Diane) she knows. Our mother gave birth with medicines. Diane said that "My husband and my mother would go out early maybe about 5:30-6 in the morning and they'd go get that medicine and what I have to use and there was certain ways you have to pick em, you had to take Indian tobacco with you and all that, have to have my Indian name and those were the things you had to do for me to have my baby in just a couple of hours. There were certain kinds of medicines that they had to pick for you to do that and I don't know why and I don't know if anyone knows that has to be done and I don't think anybody uses that anymore. You take this in a small bottle and you drink it up before you get to the hospital." It was interesting to hear about how these women used natural medicines to help them. Michelle also responded to them about how "it is all right here. It is all in mother earth. The creator gave what was needed to survive and they did for a number of years."

Diane talked about how these traditions were told through language and ceremony. "You've got to use your language for that. Got to use your language and that's one thing were really losing fast is language. We're trying our best to speak it and more so importantly than our longhouses. You've got to have your language to do your ceremony so that you work for the creator; its him that gave us all of that to live by and do by. The stories of these Elders relates to the literature in terms of there is a loss in traditions that have not been passed through the generations. Elders teach about the revelations of Aboriginal life and how philosophies are passed on through ceremony (Stiegelbauer, 1996). Archibald (2008) talks about the importance of the stories told by the Elders in her research. Elders gave important teachings about plants, animals and spiritual connections with certain mountains etc. Everything being interconnected is very important in terms of the Aboriginal culture and traditions (Archibald, 2008, Wilson, 2001, 2008, Sutherland & Henning 2009, Littlebear, 2012). The women of the community showed us this through their stories. They were willing to share these stories with a sense of humour. You could see how much their culture meant by the way they shared their own history, languages, knowledges and spirituality. There was a sense of deep learning for me as I listened to them share with us during the focus groups. Learning happens when one tries to make meaning of what was experienced (Haig-Brown, 2010). Deep learning happens when one opens his/her eyes to questioning who they are, what their own assumptions are as well as trying to listen to what people have to say (Haig-Brown, 2010). I feel as though I was given the opportunity to become a deep learner not only during the focus groups but while writing and analyzing these voices.

While analyzing these voices I saw the many connections to the literature and how it all seemed to come full circle for this project. The literature I chose for this thesis seemed to tie in well with this chapter. The reality of the situations that exist for First Nations was shown in the

literature and the personal stories and answers the community shared. I was able to see the relationships and the strength that each one of the women held in these focus groups. They all seemed to be very strong women, from the young moms to the grandmothers, Clan Mothers, Language and Knowledge keepers. In Aboriginal traditions women were seen as being closest to Mother Earth and were held in high esteem (Kenny et al., 2004). Throughout this journey I was able to see just how close these women are to their land and I hold them all in high esteem. I thank them for allowing me to go on this cultural learning journey with them.

Chapter Six

Discussion and Conclusion

Coyote Transformed

Coyote still has his mismatched eyes, and he is wandering around. He is still feeling sorry for himself. Coyote has not learned to work the two new eyes together. He is travelling alone, feeling so sorry for himself, moaning away, and inside his own thoughts. He is not watching where he is going And he is coming up to a steep canyon. He keeps walking not watching where he is going, and steps over the edge. The canyon is so deep that when he hits the bottom, his body is splattered all over the canyon walls and ground. A little while later, that Rabbit comes along and sees Coyote's pieces. Rabbit shakes his head and decides that he can help Coyote one more time. He jumps over Coyote's pieces four times and after the fourth time, Coyote becomes whole again. He thanks Rabbit for his help and continues on his journey. (Archibald, 2008, pp. 138-139).

Like Coyote the trickster I was constantly stumbling, struggling and transforming throughout this journey (Styres, 2011). I constantly questioned my ability to do this project. I think I questioned it so much because I was trying to view the world from a different perspective. A perspective that was so very different then the Western perspective I was raised and educated in. Trying to view the world through the unique eye of Indigenous research was a life changing experience for me. I was able to see things a bit differently once I heard the voices of the community. The eyes were changing and the great big lens was not overshadowing the little lens anymore. It was widening a bit with each focus group and each story. By opening the little eye a bit wider I was able to become a cultural learner. I realized what my place was in all of this research; a cultural learner. I could not have been a cultural learner without the community. The stories from the community made the literature real for me. When a listener knows where the storyteller is coming from and how it fits into the storytellers life, it makes the absorption of the knowledge that much easier (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous peoples have many ways of being, knowing, valuing and integrating with the world and I am glad that I was given the opportunity

to learn more about that. I could have not asked for a better opportunity to have become a cultural learner. I feel that I honoured the community with cultural respect, responsibility, reciprocity and reverence with my presence in the focus groups as well as in my writing (Archibald, 2008, Wilson, 2008). Learning to do research in this way was challenging and it gave me an opportunity to learn by listening, watching, reflecting and sharing (Archibald, 2008).

I realized that I was a not just a cultural learner but also a research learner throughout this journey. I had to learn to do research in a way that I never knew. As I stated in the literature a researcher being able to decide his/her own research agendas would allow Indigenous and Non-indigenous scholars to work within a research paradigm that celebrates how special Indigenous cultures truly are. The methodology I chose for this project does celebrate how special this community really is and how critically examining the issues brings awareness to them. I feel as though I pushed myself beyond methodological boundaries by interconnecting and exploring Indigenous and Western knowledges. The literature shows that when engaging and reshaping research around the interests of Indigenous communities new methodological approaches can be brought about that can privilege the voices, experiences and Indigenous knowledges of Indigenous communities (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2008; Smith, 2005; Wilson, 2001; 2008). I could not and would not have learned so much if I did not place myself beyond those boundaries as cultural learner in the community and I could not have been a research learner without the opportunities to observe more experienced members of the research team or the willingness to open myself up to the teachings offered within the writings of the Indigenous scholars.

My observations of a non-Aboriginal researcher working within a largely Aboriginal research team offered unique opportunities to explore what Indigenous scholars were writing about by applying those writings to what I was observing. I learned that doing community first

research meant that the research team had to always put the community first in all aspects of the research. It was not a catch phrase but a way of doing research. As a researcher, I discovered that community first research requires that as a researcher you listen with not only your ears but also your heart. I observed that there must be a genuine respect for the people of the community with whom you are working and a constant willingness to learn from the people each time you engage collaboratively in research with them. The knowledge that I have gained from the community and the research team is something that is very hard to explain. It changed me in a way that I began to look differently at who I was and the way I viewed the community. I became a deep learner and my world view changed because I was willing to look at the world through a different lens (Haig-Brown, 2010). I do not want to use what I have learned to gain anything but to show that what I have learned was not because of what I have done but by what these wonderful women have shared. The stories belong to these women and to the community. I wanted to write them the way they were told to show respect, relationship, reverence and reciprocity. The sharing allowed me to deepen my learning (Haig-Brown, 2010). I have become so much more humbled by this experience. This is not the end of my learning journey but the beginning. The beginning of trying to continue balancing these two eyes of research. Like Coyote thanked Rabbit I thank all who have helped me along this journey. It was worth all of the stumbling and struggling. Because without all of the stumbling and struggling I would not have transformed in my learning.

Transformation can happen when doing research. I not only tried to view the world through two eyes but I also chose to take this journey of learning slowly. I started by dipping my toes into the water and took small steps towards learning how to do research in this way. Even after this whole process I am still walking slowly into the water. I feel that taking small steps into

the water allowed me to think critically and enjoy the journey! I hope that other non-Aboriginal researchers will take small steps into the water and realize that it is an amazing experience to do research with two eyes and not view the world from just one. As Iwama et al. (2009) states, "go into a forest, you see the birch, maple, pine. Look underground and all those trees are holding hands. We as people must do the same" (Iwama et al., 2009, p.3). I hope that the research journey I embarked on with the community will open others eyes to the importance of holding hands and working together. I did my best to make sure that I could follow the words of Iwama by working together with the community. I found it important to not engage in cultural appropriation and followed the protocol of being a researcher who honoured and valued what these women had to say. Talking about my learning was important aspect that I shared about my experiences with this project but the deep learning would not have happened without the voices of the women from this community. It is my responsibility as a deep cultural learner to pass on what I have learned. The community shared who they are, who their children and community are and that needs to be valued and respected (Haig-Brown, 2010). I think I was able to show that respect throughout this journey.

I know that doing this research has given me incentive to go out and start a new journey. A journey that I was not ready to focus on during this learning journey. I would like to move forward and start searching my own family history and embrace some of the heritage that was lost by my family along the way. I look back on this journey as a deep cultural learner and realize how grateful I am to have had this experience and to have learned so much from it.

Appendix A

HRG Session Guide

Student Success: Community and Family Initiatives to Support Aboriginal Youth

Research Team: Dawn Zinga, Michelle Bomberly, Sheila Bennett, Debra Harwood, Deneen Montour, Jeff Cooper, Steven Montour & Tony Volk

The Student Success Research Consortium

Opening reminders

Welcome everyone and introduce research team members. Hand out consent forms and review them orally. Make sure to describe the four sections of the session. Remind participants that participation is voluntary. Specifically state the following: “You may have found out about this research from someone you work with, someone who provides services for you, or someone who is related to you. No matter who invited you to participate, your decision to participate or not participate is voluntary and will have no impact on your relationship with the person who invited you or in the provision of any services to which you are entitled. The person who invited you to participate will not be told whether or not you choose to participate by any of the researchers. The only way that person would know is if you decided to tell him/her. It is very important to us that you decide whether or not you would like to share your thoughts with us.” Talk about how to withdraw from the study and indicate whom they should speak to if they decide to withdraw. Let them know that speaking with this person just ensures that we can meet their wishes in terms of their data and provide any needed assistance.

Collect the consent forms and hand out the demographics questionnaires. Ask participants to complete all questions that apply to them. Let them know that they can ask questions. Once the questionnaires are completed and collected, remind the participants about the structure for the session. Remind participants about maintaining confidentiality and not using names during the session (i.e their own or other people about whom they make be speaking). Talk about being respectful of each other and the importance of hearing what they have to say. Hand out the confidentiality agreements. Discuss the video taping and why its important. Once all forms are complete and handed in, invite everyone to join in the group.

Getting to Know Each Other

Talk with the participants about the purpose of the study and the cultural rationale behind the gathering. Let everyone know that this is the chance to get to know one another. Go around the

group and have everyone introduce themselves and talk about why they are at the gathering. Towards the end of this time talk about what will be coming next and how they will be asked to talk about parenting and how to support Six Nations youth.

Lunch/Dinner

This is an informal time to share a meal and continue with conversational chit chat to feel more comfortable with each other.

Exploring the Issues

This is the time when we will explore the issues together. We have some questions to get us started but what we're really interested in is hearing what you think about parenting and listening to what you'd like to share with us. As you may know, there are a number of community organizations and community members who are concerned about the success of Six Nations students in schools. In this session we're trying to find out about parenting at Six Nations, how parents can support youth, and what supports parents need.

What does parenting look like at Six Nations?

Is there such a thing as "traditional parenting" at Six Nations and if so how would you describe it? (role of extended family)

What do traditional parenting roles look like now?

What does parenting mean to you?

Every community has cultural expectations about how a child should behave. Drawing on your own perspective how would you describe those expectations in the Six Nations community?

Are those the expectations you grew up with or were your family's expectations different? Please describe.

What expectations do you have for your children?

Have you played a parenting or caregiving role with other children? (cousins, siblings, nieces/nephews). What was that like?

What was it like when you first became a parent? (your thoughts, feelings, fears...)

Where did you get your information about parenting?

What challenges have you faced in parenting?

What did you draw on to help you parent and how did it help?

Have you used any resources or programming for parenting that are offered at Six Nations or the surrounding communities?

What was helpful about those resources/programming?

What needs to be changed about those resources/programming?

What kind of programs and/or supports do you think should be in place to help parents?

People talk a lot about success and what makes a person successful. There are a lot of different ways to think about success, we'd like to talk to you about how you think about it.

How would you define success as a parent and for your child?

What has contributed to your success in life?

What challenges have you faced that made you feel less successful?

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